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February 2023

Pasco/North Tampa/New Tampa Edition - Monthly

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**Makes Sense on  
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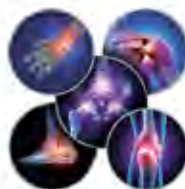
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# BALANCE YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM TO REACH YOUR HEALTH POTENTIAL IN 2023

It's easier than you think to restore your wellness potential and improve your quality of life this year - and it all starts with a balancing act.

If all of life is a balancing act, arguably one of the most important areas to maintain this balance exists inside each of us and has a direct effect on our overall health: your nervous system.

Your nervous system is responsible for regulating a wide range of bodily functions like sleep, heart rate, digestion and respiration which is why it plays such a critical role in your wellness potential.

The human body actually needs two major nervous systems to run essential functions. The first is the **central nervous system**, which consists mainly of the brain, spinal cord and the peripheral nervous system which has the nerves that carry commands from the brain. The second is the **autonomic nervous system**, which operates through parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems.

Why does this matter? Because achieving balance in the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems is vital for the health of the autonomic nervous system.

The **sympathetic nervous system** helps us respond to stress appropriately by creating the body's response to external stressors: fight, flight or freeze. However, the **parasympathetic nervous system** activates at moments of rest and relaxation.

Throughout our day, we need to alternate between these states because overfiring either system can have negative results. The sympathetic nervous system is for survival, but the parasympathetic nervous system keeps us from burning out due to stress.

A failure to balance these can result in dysautonomia or autonomic nervous system dysfunction - which, in turn, can have a seriously negative affect on your health.

## TIPS TO KEEP YOUR AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM IN CHECK

The great thing about achieving balance with your autonomic nervous system is that the steps and methods are fun or relaxing. The hard part, as always, is just conditioning yourself to actually do them.



For example, walking in nature is one great option. Another is taking time away from your screens. Spend time playing with the dog, or start stretching or doing yoga - each is another tool to help your autonomic system.

Consider this list of easy-to-do options to keep your nervous system in a healthy state:

### • Stress Management

One of the most significant ways to help balance your autonomic nervous system is to remove yourself from the situations that cause stress. If that means taking the personal time to make sure you give yourself space as needed, that's a great start.

### • Meditation

Meditation does not need to be hugely involved or rigorous practice. Of course, you can learn specific meditative arts, but sometimes just taking time to be alone and practice mindfulness is good enough. Meditation can be helpful, so don't be afraid to try it.

### • Breathing

Breathing exercises can have a profound effect on how we feel. Learning breathing exercises and strategies can give you a low-impact way of helping to manage your stress. We recommend breathing in for 5 seconds, holding that breath for 5 seconds and then exhaling for 5 seconds. Do this 5 times to trigger your parasympathetic side.

### • Massage

Touch is vital to feeling whole, and massage can work wonders as a therapeutic practice. Even personal massagers and a massage chair visit can be an excellent service for your autonomic nervous system.

### • Nutrition

What you eat can have a significant impact on how you feel. Diets high in salts and sugars can contribute to stress, so changing your diet to reduce those elements can help stress melt away. Need help with a nutrition plan?

### • Exercise

For most people, a little exercise does the body a lot of good. Activity stress is a good sort of stress used to balance the autonomic nervous system. Doing low impact cardio is a great option - we also recommend personal training with the NEUBIE to get the same gains with less impact.

### • Sleep

No surprise here - sometimes we just need a little more sleep. Go to bed earlier, take a nap or catch a little shut-eye during a break - it can do wonders! Sleep is a natural therapeutic process for the human body, so it makes sense that it can also help manage stress.

## HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN FAST-TRACK YOUR RESULTS

Your physical therapist can play a significant role in helping you improve your health and wellness potential by leading you through a variety of different techniques and interventions that positively influence your nervous system.

Here are just some of the important benefits a therapist can provide:

### • Combat Underlying Medical Conditions

Physical therapists are experts at identifying any underlying medical conditions that may contribute to ANS dysfunction, including hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea and certain types of heart disease. For example, if you suffer from Long COVID symptoms, your ANS is likely in a sustained "fight or flight" mode and in desperate need of relief.

### • Reduce Ongoing Stress and Anxiety

With a nation under siege with stress and anxiety, physical therapists can target a patient's ANS function and reduce the stressors that lead to increased heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension. With traditional techniques like deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, and yoga, PTs help patients balance their ANS and return to "rest and relax" mode.

### • Address Musculoskeletal Issues

Physical therapists also help patients manage their nervous system by addressing any musculoskeletal issues that contribute to ANS dysfunction. For example, if a patient has poor posture, it can lead to increased muscle tension and strain on the ANS. Physical therapists use technology, exercises and stretches to improve posture and reduce muscle tension.



• **Provide Therapeutic Exercise Programs**

PTs can design a therapeutic exercise program that is tailored to a patient's specific needs and fitness level. Additionally, physical therapists can teach patients how to properly perform exercises and use proper form to avoid injury and maximize the benefits. Physical therapists can also use manual therapy techniques such as massage to balance their nervous system and reduce muscle tension, improve circulation and promote relaxation.

• **Introduce a Healthier Lifestyle Approach**

Lastly, physical therapists can be a great resource for educating patients about the importance of good sleep hygiene, eating a healthy diet and maintaining a healthy weight. All of these factors can have a major impact on ANS function, and physical therapists will work with patients to help them make lifestyle changes that reach their health potential in 2023.

**THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM'S HEALTH**

State-of-the-art technology is now available and can play a big role in your nervous system's health potential. Your local physical therapist has access to a number of programs and technologies that can improve the function of your autonomic nervous system. Some examples include:

**1. Heart Rate Variability (HRV) monitoring:** HRV therapy is a measure of the variability in time between heartbeats. It is an indicator of the balance of activity between the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the ANS. By measuring HRV, physical therapists can assess health functions and monitor any changes in response to exercise or relaxation techniques.

**2. Biofeedback:** Biofeedback is a technology that uses sensors to monitor processes such as heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension. The data is then used to provide feedback that can help you learn to control these processes. For example, by monitoring HRV, biofeedback can help patients learn to improve their balance between sympathetic and parasympathetic activity.

**3. Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NMES):** Best performed with the NEUBIE, this is a technique that uses electrical impulses to stimulate the muscles. It can be used to improve the function of the ANS by identifying the underlying dysfunction and stimulating the muscles that can lead to more strength and a quicker recovery. It can also help improve blood pressure and heart rate variability as well.

**4. Pulsed Electro-Magnetic Field Therapy:** PEMF therapy is a type of treatment that uses electromagnetic fields to improve the body's natural healing processes. The therapy involves exposing the body to electromagnetic fields at specific frequencies and intensities, which can stimulate cellular activity and promote healing in the affected area and balance within the ANS, ultimately alleviating pain, improving circulation and enhancing the healing of fractures and other injuries.

Physical therapists can assess your individual needs and determine which programs and physical therapy technologies may be most appropriate for you so they can design a comprehensive treatment plan that addresses underlying medical conditions or musculoskeletal issues, provides therapeutic exercise, implements manual therapy techniques and educates you about healthy lifestyle practices.

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# What an Orthopedic Surgeon Wants You to Know About Treating Arthritis

By William A Cooper, DO

**W**e see a high prevalence of osteoarthritis in obese patients due to wear and tear and pressure on the joints, including forces and friction. If patients can lose weight, they can reduce or stop the progression of arthritic damage.

## Osteoarthritis (OA)

The biggest misconception for most patients is to rest their joints thinking they will heal, but in reality, people need to move and create activity and mobility, not immobility. This is essential for the joints; however, it should never be aggressive or strenuous motion.

There is structural and inflammatory arthritis. Osteoarthritis comes down to a loss of the cartilage of the overlying bones, which causes stress and angers the joint. It produces pain, swelling, and stiffness.

Osteoarthritis typically is an endpoint of post-traumatic injury, torn ligaments, genetic predispositions, or alignment issues.

Physical therapy is a first-line treatment that I personally take very seriously. I don't rush patients into surgical procedures. We prefer to exhaust our conservative treatment options before surgical intervention is recommended. Conservative methods often can treat the area quite well depending on which joint has OA.

## Conservative Treatment

- Physical Therapy
- Rest, but not immobilization.
- Corticosteroid injections
- Viscosupplementation Injections
- PRP (Platelet-Rich Plasma)

All injectables that I offer are ultrasound-guided, which allows me to see the precise area within the joint that I'm injecting the solution into for precision medicine, which provides optimal outcomes.

## Injectables

- Corticosteroids reduce pain and inflammation
- Viscosupplementation is a hyaluronic gel that can be lubricated and produce a cushion for the joint to glide against.
- PRP is taken from the patient's own blood, spun down, and the platelet-rich plasma is injected into the joint. PRP has growth factors that are known to produce healing mechanisms and work very well in many joints, especially the knees, and for tendonitis or tendinopathy. I've seen remarkable results for my patients.

## Diet and Exercise

From a preventative standpoint, what can people do to prevent injury or re-injury? Generally, the most important angle is diet and exercise. Individuals who maintain a healthy weight and work out daily to keep their muscles strong and increase blood circulation and oxygen intake are in a better category than those who eat poorly and are more sedentary.

If patients have OA, they may not be able to work out at the same intensity they did prior to their injury or state, but I can't stress enough the importance of moving; even if all you can do is a brisk walk, it's critical for overall well-being and musculoskeletal health.

Diet is crucial for general health and is dependent upon the individual's needs, belief systems, and preferences. I tell patients to avoid processed and refined foods and opt for a healthier diet to reduce inflammation.

## Surgery

Surgical arthroscopy is minimally invasive and can be used to salvage cartilage and regrow cartilage. In my patient population, which is middle to elderly aged, I try every conservative treatment option first. Still, many times, due to the patients' health or the severity of their OA, arthroplasty or partial joint replacement, or total joint replacement may be necessary to help them regain function and range of motion.



**William A Cooper, DO**  
Board-Certified Orthopedic Surgeon

Dr. William Cooper is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon with BayCare Medical Group, serving the Trinity, Florida area. He completed his undergraduate degree in biology from Excelsior College in Albany, New York. Dr. Cooper earned his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He continued his medical education by completing a surgical internship, followed by an orthopedic surgical residency at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas. Dr. Cooper provides compassionate, evidence-based orthopedic care to patients of all ages. As a veteran of the United States Army and United States Navy, Dr. Cooper's military background gave him significant experience and skill in managing complex orthopedic sports injuries, joint reconstruction, and orthopedic trauma. Dr. Cooper performs numerous surgical procedures that include both robotic and traditional hip and knee replacements, with a particular focus on minimally invasive anterior hip and partial knee replacements. He is also proficient in arthroscopic management of knee and shoulder injuries, such as ligament reconstruction, rotator cuff repair and shoulder stabilization. Dr. Cooper has notable experience in operative and nonoperative fracture management. He also treats various hand conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome and trigger fingers. He is affiliated with Morton Plant North Bay Hospital.

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To learn more about Dr. Cooper or to schedule an appointment please visit [DrWilliamCooper.org](http://DrWilliamCooper.org) or call (727) 372-4210.



Listen to Dr. Cooper's podcast to learn more.





# PICKLEBALL: FIVE STRETCHES TO PREVENT INJURY

By Regenexx at New Regeneration Orthopedics

**H**ave you heard of Pickleball? If you have, you know it's a sport rapidly-rising in popularity and making major waves in the recreational sport and the professional sports scenes. This sport also was recently boosted in the media when seven-time SuperBowl Champion Tom Brady invested in a professional Pickleball team in Major League Pickleball (MLP).



## How did Pickleball Start?

Although today we see professional tournaments and star-studded endorsements of the sport, Pickleball had humble beginnings. The game of Pickleball was invented in 1965 by three dads, trying to come up with a way to entertain their kids who were "bored" while on summer break. They had access to a Badminton court, ping-pong paddles and a perforated plastic ball. They created a game with simple rules and evolved the court over the weekend to have a lowered net and a harder surface. Just two years later, one of the original dads built an official Pickleball court and popularity organically grew until it was played in all 50 states by 1990. With continuing growth and development, the new USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) was established in 2003 and has grown to reach the 50,000 milestone and ended 2021 with just over 53,000 members.

The Basics of what you need to know about the game of Pickleball is succinctly described by the USA Pickleball organization:

- 1 A fun sport that combines many elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong.
- 2 Played both indoors or outdoors on a badminton-sized court and a slightly modified tennis net.
- 3 Played with a paddle and a plastic ball with holes.
- 4 Played as doubles or singles.
- 5 Can be enjoyed by all ages and skill levels

## Injuries Related to Pickleball

Locally, we can attest to the rising popularity of the sport, as the Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota areas have appreciated Pickleball courts as additions to parks and clubs. With this growing popularity, that means we tend to see a growing number of injuries related to Pickleball in our Regenexx at New Regeneration Orthopedics offices. The Pickleball injuries we have seen, for the most part, are due to overuse.

The overuse injuries we have seen from our Pickleball athletes have included:

- Lateral Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow)
- Medial Epicondylitis (Golfer's Elbow)
- Rotator Cuff Tendonitis
- Wrist Sprain
- Knee Pain
- Low Back Pain

These common overuse injuries help us to identify the wrist, elbows, shoulder, low back, and knees as the most common areas susceptible to aches and pains with increased Pickleball play. So, if you got a new Pickleball kit, here are five stretches to do before and after you hit the court, to prevent you from slowing down your game.

*\*Note: These stretches are example recommendations, and you should always consult your physician before beginning any new fitness regimen.*

## EXERCISES TO PREVENT INJURY

### 1 Wrist Flexor Stretch

- With your elbow straight and your palm facing up (forearm in a supinated position), extend the wrist and grab the fingers with your free hand.
- Gently pull your fingers and wrist in extension toward the floor.
- Hold the stretch for the recommended time.



### 2 Pec Stretch

- Stand up next to a wall corner or in a doorway.
- Place your forearm along the wall, with your upper arm raised 90° from your body.
- Lean your body forward until you feel a stretch across your chest.
- Hold for 30-90 seconds, rest and repeat three times.



### 3 Child's Pose With Rotation

- Start on all fours and push your hips back so your buttocks rest on your heels. You may want to have your knees apart to be more comfortable.
- Reach forward with your hands and hold the stretch for 30-90 seconds.
- Next, reach to one side with both hands and hold the stretch for 30-90 seconds.
- Then, reach to the other side and hold the stretch for 30-90 seconds.



### 4 Hip Flexor Stretch

- Position yourself in a half-kneeling stance with the leg to stretch placed behind.
- Lean forward at the hip while twisting your trunk toward the front leg hold for 60 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.



### 5 Quad Stretch

- Stand in front of a chair or a stable object and hold on to it with one hand.
- Grab the top of one ankle with one hand and pull your foot towards your buttock until you feel a gentle stretch in front of the thigh.
- Hold the stretch for 60-90 seconds, keeping your lower back neutral (not arching) and return to the initial position. The goal is to be able to gently, over time, be able to touch your knee to your buttock without strain.
- Repeat on the other side.



## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

If wrist, elbow, shoulder, back or knee pain are interfering with your Pickleball game, our physicians at Regenexx at New Regeneration Orthopedics are a great starting point to get a comprehensive evaluation, and an honest recommendation of what the best course of action for you would be. Our goal is to keep you out on the Pickleball court, pain free!

References: 1 Physiotec.ca



James Leiber, DO | Ron Torrance II, DO FAOASM  
Ignatios Papas, DO | Lisa Valastro, DO

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# DNA HAIR REGENERATION & STEM CELL FACELIFT

**J**ohn Satino is passionate about so many new technologies in the cosmetic industry. Healing our bodies comes from within. DNA and Stem Cells are natural ingredients from our bodies that can make us look younger, feel healthier, repair injuries, and potentially solve our own "problems". Biomedical Engineering is not a new science: pacemakers and organ transplants were some of its earliest successes. Today we have so many aesthetic uses for stem cells that even Dolly the cloned sheep seems like centuries-old news.

Health and Wellness Magazine was pleased it sit down with NASA consultant John Satino and discuss his 2012 discovery of Stem Cell Face Lifts. Human plasma proteins combined with platelet-rich plasma sounds fascinating but wait until you see the results.

**Health and Wellness Magazine asked: Mr. Santino, how can the Stem Cell Face Lift change my life?**

**Mr. Santino:** Up until now, you had one choice to combat the signs of aging, and that was surgery. Beyond the out-of-pocket cost of a traditional facelift, there is risk and an extended recovery time. And it's possible that after the surgery, you end up looking like your face was in a wind tunnel at a hundred miles per hour for an extended period of time.

Thinner, older, tightly stretched skin can look very unnatural. Our patients look totally natural, rested, and as if they had been on vacation. All with no downtime. Many say this new technology changes their lives. And the risk is undoubtedly less.

**H&W: Tell the readers about a patient you have helped recover from an injury with this technology.**

**Mr. Santino:** We have helped patients with facial irregularities such as a birth mark. Severe acne scarring can definitely be improved and corrected. Often a stroke can affect the face. In the case of a stroke, we can treat only the affected side of the face for a natural symmetrical correction.



Before and After - 1 Hour

## H&W: How do stem cells reverse aging?

**Mr. Santino:** Stem Cells are the body's growth factor. They are immortal. You produce stem cells for life from the bone marrow. Not as many at age eighty as at age twenty, but your body produces stem cells throughout your entire life.

For example, if you get a cut or injury, a signal is released to the bone marrow to release these growth factors. The stem cells travel through the blood system to the injury to promote healing. At the site of the injury, the stem cells help heal and develop bone, skin, blood, or specialized cells necessary for the body to heal itself.



Therefore, an injury heals very quickly when you are young due to the more plentiful number of stem cells available. These stem cells are not as plentiful as we age, and injuries take longer to heal. In compliance with current FDA rulings, we can extract body tissue, fat, or blood from your OWN body and concentrate it on a four-to-one basis in our lab. This means we are essentially reintroducing four times younger cells into the face. This leads to increased collagen, elastin and skin tightening in a very short time when we reintroduce your OWN stem cells back into your OWN body.

## John Satino, Clinical Director and Research Coordinator



John Satino's primary training in Chinese acupuncture was received in 1971. Additionally, he was the principal developer of Elector-Acupuncture in the US in 1973 and the Research Coordinator for Biotone International and Wright State University's development of Elec-

tronic Muscle Stimulation to reverse Leg Muscle Atrophy in Spinal Cord Injuries in 1977. John worked as a Research and Development Consultant for NASA's Biomedical Department at Kennedy Space Center in 1983 for the development of E.M.S. to prevent Leg Muscle Atrophy. In 1991 he was the Research Coordinator for Merck Pharmaceutical's clinical trial of Finasteride (Propecia). Dr. Satino has also been published in The Hair Journal, and The International Journal of Cosmetic Surgery and Aesthetic Dermatology.

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# GALLBLADDER CANCER

**G**allbladder cancer is a rare disease. The American Cancer Society estimates that in the United States, 6,570 women and 5,750 men will be diagnosed with cancer of the gallbladder or nearby large bile ducts in 2023. It occurs more frequently in women than in men, and the incidence is higher for Latinos, Mexican Americans and Native Americans. It is most often found in people over the age of 65; the average age at diagnosis is 72.

## A Closer Look

The gallbladder is a small, pear-shaped organ under the liver, located behind the right lower ribs. By adulthood, it is usually about three to four inches long and no wider than one inch. Its basic function is to store bile, a fluid produced by the liver that helps break down fatty foods as they pass through the small intestine.

Interestingly, while the gallbladder helps to digest food, we don't need the organ to live. Many people have their gallbladders removed due to chronic inflammation and go on to live normal lives.

Nearly all gallbladder cancers are adenocarcinomas that start when cells in the inner layer of the gallbladder grow out of control and spread through the outer layer. It is not usually found until it has become advanced and spread outside of the gallbladder and causes symptoms. In fact, only about one of five cases are found in the early stages.

## Chronic Inflammation: A Common Risk Factor

Many of the risk factors that make a person more likely to develop gallbladder cancer are related to chronic inflammation in the gallbladder.

The majority of people with gallbladder cancer have gallstones at the time of diagnoses. People with porcelain gallbladder, a condition in which the wall of the gallbladder becomes covered with calcium deposits after long-term inflammation often caused by gallstones, have a higher risk of developing gallbladder cancer.

Even though gallstones are very common, most people with gallstones never develop gallbladder cancer.

## Detecting & Diagnosing Gallbladder Cancer

Because there are no signs or symptoms in the early stages, gallbladder cancer is difficult to find and diagnose before it becomes advanced. Its location deep inside the body does not allow for early tumors to be seen or felt during routine physical exams, and there are no blood tests or other screenings that reliably detect early gallbladder cancers.

Symptoms of gallbladder cancer often become known when bile ducts become blocked, and the most common symptoms include:

- Pain in the stomach, often in the upper right part of the belly.
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes).
- Nausea and/or vomiting.
- Lumps in the abdomen.
- Fever.

## Other less common symptoms can include:

- Weight loss and/or loss of appetite.
- Abdominal swelling.
- Dark urine.
- Light-colored or greasy stools.
- Itchy skin.

It's important to remember that gallbladder cancer is rare, and many of these symptoms can occur with other more common illnesses. Regardless, it is important to contact your health care provider if you experience any of these problems.

If your doctor suspects gallbladder cancer is present, a complete health history and medical exam will be among the first steps. Blood tests may be ordered to measure liver function and/or the presence of certain substances that can signal disease. A variety of imaging tests, such as CT scan, ultrasound or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), may also be helpful to confirm a diagnosis.

## Treatment

When gallbladder cancer is confirmed and the stage is determined, it is placed into one of two treatment groups.

If cancer is localized, meaning it is found in the wall of the gallbladder, it may be treated with a cholecystectomy, a surgical procedure to remove the organ and some of the tissue around it. If the cancer has spread and cannot be removed, other surgical procedures may be used to drain bile and help relieve symptoms. Radiation therapy and chemotherapy can also be used to destroy cancer cells.

Treatment decisions are also dependent on the age, general health and personal preferences of each patient.

## New Treatment Options Through Clinical Trials

Researchers are constantly seeking new ways to treat and prevent cancer, and an important part of that research is informed by clinical trials. These studies, supervised by clinicians who are cancer experts, can offer patients access to safe and effective new treatments that may be better than the existing standard treatments and not available elsewhere. Doctors can guide patients to identify whether a clinical trial exists and may be recommended.

## An Ounce of Prevention

Many of the known risk factors for gallbladder cancer are things we cannot control, such as gender, age, ethnicity and bile duct conditions. However, lifestyle habits and choices can help minimize the risk for all forms of cancer:

- Stay physically active and maintain a healthy weight.
- Follow a healthy diet that includes plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grains, and limits highly processed foods, sugar and red meat.
- If you drink alcohol, limit consumption.
- If you don't smoke, don't start, and if you do smoke, do your best to quit.



Staying in tune with your body and regular checkups with your health care provider increase your chances of staying healthy and identifying cancer and other illnesses early, when treatment options are at their best.

## World-Class Cancer Treatment Close to Home About Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute, LLC: (FLCancer.com)

Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute has built a national reputation for excellence that is reflected in exceptional and compassionate patient care, driven by innovative clinical research, cutting-edge technologies and advanced treatments, including targeted therapies, genomic-based treatment and immunotherapy. Our highest values are embodied by our outstanding team of highly trained and dedicated physicians, clinicians and staff.



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**Zephyrhills Green Slope**  
7315 Green Slope Drive  
Zephyrhills, Florida 33541

For more information, visit [FLCancer.com](http://FLCancer.com)



# Seniors Nutrition Needs:

## Do You Know What You Should be Eating as You Age?

**A**s we age, our nutritional needs change. Physiological changes in the body cause things such as slower metabolism, less lean body mass, less muscle definition, lower bone density, slower metabolism, basal metabolic deficiency, and lower energy levels. Seniors may also be dealing with health issues on top of their bodies changing needs. Therefore, it's important to map out a custom plan with your doctor or nutritionist to make sure you're getting the most out of your diet. Proper nutrition can help stave off disease, increase cognition, increase strength and endurance and so much more.

### Symptoms of Nutrient Deficiencies:

- Weight loss
- Decreased appetite
- Uninterested in hydrating
- Irritability
- Lack of concentration
- Feeling cold
- Loss of muscles and strength
- Prone to illness
- Inability to fight infection
- Impaired wound healing
- Depression
- Cognitive decline and confusion

Protein is critical as we age.

The aging body processes protein less efficiently than when we were younger. This isn't just true for the elderly that might be ill or facing chronic conditions, but for all seniors.

A 2013 study recommends that healthy older adults consume 1 to 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. For the average woman that is about 70 grams and for a male, 100 grams of protein per day.

### A few examples of what our diets offer in grams of protein is as follows:

- 4 oz chicken breast = 25 grams
- 2 eggs = 12 grams
- 2 oz cheese = 14 grams
- ½ cup of chickpeas (garbanzo beans) = 18 grams
- 1 cup leafy greens = 9 grams
- 1 cup broccoli = 2.6 grams
- 1 oz mixed nuts = 5 grams
- 1 cup of oatmeal = 6 grams
- 8 oz cow's milk = 8 grams
- 8 oz almond milk = 1 gram

If you are having difficulty meeting your nutritional needs or have symptoms of nutritional deficiencies, adding in protein powders is also an alternative to whole food consumption that will help you meet your nutritional goals. Again, talking to a medical professional about what's best for you is essential.

The folks at Aston Gardens at Tampa Bay have perfected senior community living and offer extensive opportunities and events for their residents to enjoy throughout each day of the month.

### Aston Gardens' Independent Living Features Include:

1. No maintenance
2. No more snow shoveling
3. No more yard work
4. Fine dining and chef-prepared meals
5. Convenience to shopping, the arts, sporting events, restaurants, pharmacies, medical care and much more
6. Safety and security of a gated community
7. Ongoing activities and events
8. Friendly staff and fantastic neighbors
9. Fabulous, resort-quality amenities

At Aston Gardens, they offer several options that suit multiple needs for each individual or couple.

### Aston Gardens' Senior Living Options at Our Tampa Bay Campus

In our beautifully appointed Tampa, Florida retirement community, we offer the following senior living options:

- **Independent Living** – Stay active through daily events, outings, and recreational opportunities while enjoying the peace of mind of having on-site staff
- **SHINE® Memory Care** – In our memory care program, residents will receive personalized attention and assistance with everyday living activities as needed
- **Senior Assisted Living** – Suitable for residents who need a little, extra assistance with daily tasks like medication management, personal grooming, and household chores



Aston Gardens is one of the most highly sought-after communities due to their dedication to senior needs, their commitment to enriching the lives of each resident and their families by providing personalized care, welcoming living spaces, and superior amenities.

### Aston Gardens At Tampa Bay

Aston Gardens is a luxury senior living community offering the best combinations of active-adult lifestyles and personalized care services. Wake up inspired each morning with a wealth of amenities, activities, and support at your doorstep. Explore the stylish Grande Clubhouse and indulge in our unique lifestyle services: Sensations Dining, Celebrations Activities and Dimensions Wellness. Let our dedicated team members handle transportation, maintenance, housekeeping, concierge services and more. Here you will find compassionate people engaged in enriching the lives of seniors, ensuring their needs are taken care of every day. Aston Gardens At Tampa Bay offers the best value in affordable, carefree, senior living. Everything we do is focused on providing you the very best in senior living. It's all right here!

See why so many people want to call  
Aston Gardens their home!

Call 813-343-4673 today or visit  
astongardens.com.



By Discovery Senior Living

AL#10546, 9439, 10175, 10612, 10316







Dr. Sunil Panchal

## A PATIENT'S EXCRUCIATING BACK AND LEG PAIN...

### Relieved in One Day!

One year ago, David was lifting a fire pit in his back yard and fell to the ground in infuriating pain. He could not get up as the pain was completely unbearable. EMS transported him to the emergency room, and he was admitted to the hospital. David had a herniated disc and was prescribed pain medications and discharged.

"The pain medications worked for a while, but eventually, the pain returned, and I had excruciating pain in my left leg as well." Said David.

After seeing multiple doctors, including a spine surgeon, and getting CT scans, ultrasounds, and MRIs, no one could figure out why David's pain was so immense, and they also had no idea why his left leg was painful, even more so than his back. Unable to accurately diagnose and treat him, David was left to suffer for another five months.

His Primary care physician finally referred him to a pain specialist that has been helping numerous patients find relief through regenerative and alternative procedures. Dr. Panchal is the founder of the National Institute of Spine and Pain.

David continued, "At the very first visit that I had with Dr. Panchal, he looked over my images and immediately knew the root cause of my pain, and he explained to me in full detail exactly what he needed to do to relieve it."

From the images, Dr. Panchal saw that David had a nerve that was being impinged and compressed by spinal neural foraminal stenosis of L3. Spinal neural foraminal stenosis refers to the narrowing of the foramen, which are small openings between each vertebra in the spine. Nerve roots pass through the foramen, so in David's case, his nerve was severely compressed in the gap and causing him unyielding leg pain along with lower back pain.

Dr. Panchal explained that David needed a procedure to shave the disc down to relieve the pressure on the nerve. The procedure is called endoscopic discectomy and decompression of the nerve root.

This procedure is performed while the patient is under light anesthesia, which allows open communication for patients to express pain thresholds with Dr. Panchal. David was not happy about having to have any surgery, even though Dr. Panchal explained that it was minimally invasive. After two months, David decided he needed to do it to relieve his daily pain that was disrupting his life.

David told us that after the surgery, which was this past December, he has no pain! David no longer needs pain medications, and he is back to living the quality of life that he and his family enjoy, pain-free with complete resolution.

Endoscopic discectomy and decompression is an outpatient procedure done under x-ray fluoroscopy to remove herniated disc material through a small, half-inch incision. It's done under light sedation and local anesthetic.

A 3-D video is used to guide guidance, tiny instruments through an endoscopic probe. The procedure takes approximately an hour and causes minimal discomfort, and a small bandage is usually enough for the closure of the tiny incision.

*Dr. Sunil Panchal of the National Institute of Spine and Pain* has been committed to regenerative medicine and stem cell therapy for several years. Dr. Panchal explains exosome therapy further, "This is an exciting new approach for regenerative medicine. Unlike PRP which has limited growth factors, or bone marrow and fat aspirate, which has an unknown quantity of stem cells, or growth factors from the patient, or the use of fetal cord blood stem cells (which has unknown function after thawing and also the risk

of tumor formation from foreign DNA), exosomes are a highly concentrated and reproducible source of growth factors for regenerative techniques.

"The other approaches typically take six months to see any results. With exosomes, I've had some patients begin to notice improvement as early as 2-3 weeks. And since this is an acellular product, there is no risk of tumor development." said, Dr. Panchal.

Dr. Panchal has treated patients with exosome therapy for pain in the cervical and lumbar facet joints, sacroiliac joints, knees, hips, ankles, elbows, shoulders, ligament injuries, and also degenerative discs. These tiny exosome communicators that secrete therapeutic and regenerative effects to the cells and tissues throughout the body are becoming highly-sought-after by many patients that have suffered from pain and chronic disorders. Some of the additional findings within peer-reviewed studies are as follows:

- Self-Renewing Capabilities
- Cellular Differentiating Ability
- Tissue Repair
- Anti-Inflammatory Effect
- Immunosuppression
- Neuroprotection

Although surgery is critical in certain situations, finding alternative methods to treat the underlying condition is always the first step. The National Institute of Spine and Pain is a state-of-the-art facility that specializes in the treatment of spine and orthopedic conditions, as well as acute and chronic pain management. They provide the utmost quality of care for patients to address the problem directly, and if needed, provide for their pain management needs.

At The National Institute of Spine and Pain, they treat each patient individually, using the latest equipment and various innovative procedures to diagnose pain and determine your care needs. The National Institute of Spine and Pain's President and Founder, Sunil J. Panchal, MD, is a board-certified interventional pain/ minimally invasive spine physician.

At The National Institute of Spine and Pain, their goal is to strive to deliver the highest quality of comprehensive care for those who are suffering from spine, joint, and nerve injuries. They have many alternatives to help you with your personalized treatment needs. Please visit their website at [www.nationalinstituteofpain.org](http://www.nationalinstituteofpain.org), or call them at (813) 264-PAIN (7246).

#### The National Institute of Spine and Pain

4911 Van Dyke Rd., Lutz, FL 33558  
10740 Palm River Rd, Suite 490, Tampa, FL 33619

(813) 264-PAIN (7246)

[www.nationalinstituteofpain.org](http://www.nationalinstituteofpain.org)





# The Season of Love: Give Yourself and Your Partner the Gift of GAINSwave

BY DR. ROBERT LUPO, D.C.

Is your relationship lacking? It's common to experience lulls in the romance department, especially if you are suffering from erectile dysfunction. ED can not only inhibit performance, but it often takes its toll on men and their partners emotionally and mentally.

Although it's a common condition, it can be a crushing disorder that wreaks havoc on a man's psyche, which in turn, can cause severe anxiety and further intensify erectile dysfunction and low libido.

What if you didn't have to worry about your situation any longer? What if you didn't need to rely on a little blue pill and wait for its effect to kick in? ED pills only mask the symptoms of ED, but DO NOT treat the cause.

GAINSwave is an innovative treatment option for ED that provides remarkable results without drugs or surgery.

## Treat ED's Cause with GAINSwave

GAINSwave treats erectile dysfunction at its core. The GAINSwave is a revolutionary, non-invasive treatment that addresses the underlying causes of ED. GAINSwave uses scientifically proven technology through sound waves to stimulate blood circulation, tissue regeneration, and removes plaque build-up. Traditional treatments for ED, such as pills or injections, lose effectiveness over time and have to be used every time a man wants to engage in sexual activity.

GAINSwave is proven to break up scar tissue and plaque, which are often the root cause of ED. GAINSwave can rejuvenate and turn back the clock, leaving men with the vigor and stamina from their youth.

GAINSwave is also the number 1 bio-hack for men without ED just wanting to have harder, healthier, and stronger erections than they experience now!

Dr. Lupo, Founder of the Physical Medicine Center treats the root cause of ED. In addition to these conditions, Dr. Lupo provides the most advanced groundbreaking technology and procedures for his patients, and when it comes to ED, GAINSwave is supreme.



GAINSwave utilizes high frequency, low-intensity soundwaves to improve blood flow to the penis, remove micro-plaque, and stimulates the growth of new blood vessels. GAINSwave uses a specific protocol designed to optimize efficacy, safety, and results. Over 80% of Erectile Dysfunction (ED) issues are caused by reduced blood flow. GAINSwave has developed a protocol to treat ED and Peyronie's disease (scar tissue) as well as enhance sexual performance.

## It's Never too Late

Men who are just beginning to see ED warning indicators should seek the earliest treatment possible. The reason is that it has been well documented that if early diagnosis and treatment are started when a man is younger (the 30s, 40s, 50s) there is an increased chance that the ED will very likely no longer need medical treatment and their arteriosclerosis can dissipate. There have been multiple peer-reviewed studies that indicate that GAINSwave treatment can potentially cure ED in some patients. The sooner you intervene with treatment, the better your outcome will be, but it's not too late. GAINSwave has helped many patients with advanced ED conditions.

Almost everyone will experience a decline in sexual functioning. But with the advent of Regenerative medicine, Erectile Dysfunction is no longer an inevitable part of aging. GAINSwave is based on a series of over 30 clinical studies showing a greater than 75% success rate in treating Erectile Dysfunction (ED).

## Give yourself and your partner the gift of GAINSwave

**DON'T JUST MASK YOUR SYMPTOMS—TREAT THE ROOT CAUSE!**

If you want drug-free alternative options for your health needs, look no further than the Physical Medicine Center in north Tampa. The Physical Medicine Center treats both male and female patients who desire alternative therapies to get to the root cause of their conditions.

Call them today at 813-607-5095 to schedule your appointment.

Physical Medicine Center has many Google Reviews, you can find those at [Google.com/Reviews/PhysicalMedicineCenterTampa](https://www.google.com/Reviews/PhysicalMedicineCenterTampa).

## Dr. Robert Lupo, D.C.

Dr. Robert Lupo is the clinic director at Physical Medicine Center located in north Tampa near the University of South Florida and New Tampa. Physical Medicine Center is a multidisciplinary medical center that offers Medical Core, Chiropractic Core, and Physical Therapy. Dr. Lupo attended Life University in Marietta Georgia and graduated with a Doctor of Chiropractic degree in 1985. Dr. Lupo has taken post-graduate education in chiropractic orthopedics, neurology, spinal disc injury core, and auto accident and injury core. Physical Medicine Center also offers massage therapy, treatment for dizziness, balance disorders, Spectra cell nutritional blood analysis, bio-identical hormone replacement therapy for men and women and nutritional IV.

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# Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: Can it Boost the Immune System?

**H**yperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) is one of the methods used to increase oxygen throughout the tissues cells to destroy anaerobic bacteria, which cannot exist in an oxygenated area. It is also touted as having the ability to improve immune function and repair damaged tissues. Many researchers purport that HBOT can destroy and kill viruses and bacteria. Additionally, many patients report feeling better after HBOT sessions. Repeatedly these same patients show marked signs of improvement rather quickly, and over time, they very often show little to no symptoms or signs of their disease or condition.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is a medical treatment that delivers 100% oxygen to a patient's pulmonary system while they are within a pressurized chamber. This saturation of oxygen allows high-levels of life-sustaining oxygen to be delivered to the tissues and organs. This increase of the partial pressure of oxygen at the cellular level accelerates the regenerative processes and assists in the recovery from numerous indications.

With hyperbaric oxygen, enough molecular oxygen can be dissolved into a patient's blood stream and tissues to fulfill all metabolic necessities. Breathing 100% oxygen at 1, 2 or 3 atmospheres results in 2,4 and 6 ml of oxygen in solution per 100 ml of blood, respectively. Patients are usually treated with 1.2 to 3.0 times atmospheric pressure for 30 to 90 minutes, which is equivalent to the pressure that a diver is exposed to at a depth of between 5 and 20 meters underwater.<sup>1</sup> A study on rheumatoid arthritis and immune function with HBOT showed that hyperbaric oxygen has immunosuppressive properties modulated by decreasing interleukin 1 (white blood cells) and prostaglandin E2 (mediator in inflammation) production.<sup>2</sup>

Many patients have tried HBOT for various disorders and disease states, and the majority of them will give glowing reviews for disease reversal and regression. There are no guarantees, and off-label use is always at the patients personal discretion and referral by the physician. Individuals wanting to explore HBOT have the right to do so, although results are always based on a patient's overall health, physical condition, and other medical factors.

Hyperbaric Centers of Florida provides a clean, professional and caring environment for all of our patients. The founders of our new center have over 40 years of cumulative experience in Hyperbaric Medicine and providing Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for a broad spectrum of indications.

## Why Patient's Prefer Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy at our Center?

Not all clinics are created equal. With Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy It is always more important to find a safe clinic with a fully trained knowledgeable staff rather than a close clinic, or one that touts false claims. This is one reason people from all over the world travel to Hyperbaric Centers of Florida. We use Real ASME PVHO Chambers capable of 3 Atmospheres Absolute of pressure (29.4psi), Medical Grade oil-less / oil-free breathing air compressors, 100% Medical Grade Oxygen, Sea-Long Hoods, and 100% Cotton Scrubs. Hyperbaric Centers of Florida has a reputation of providing the safest and most comfortable treatments available.

Hyperbaric Centers of Florida is a premier hyperbaric treatment facility located in the Tampa Bay area. Their state-of-the-art hyperbaric clinic provides therapy to outpatients on a 7-day per week basis, closing only on major holidays.

## Patient Testimonials

*"My son and I had this treatment done far Lyme disease. The staff were amazing and so empathetic to our needs, they really go above and beyond for their clients."*—Rachel W.

*"Total confidence. We have used several different Hyperbaric Medicine facilities around the country, and this is the best overall experience, by far. Everything is up to date and safe, and the staff makes you feel like you are family. They make a point of it!"*—Thomas P.

*"Wonderful staff and amazing results. Words cannot describe how it feels to hear your child's voice again after TBI took it away. To see my daughter color, play with her toys, and eat by mouth again is something that is truly amazing. We will definitely be back in the fall. #PrayforGia."*—Tyler Z.

*"This place is great. They have helped our family out for several years with safe, effective and professional hyperbaric treatments."*—The Payne Family

Currently, There Are 15 FDA Approved HBOT Conditions:

- Air or Gas Embolism
- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
- Compromised Skin Grafts or Flaps
- Crush Injury, Compartment Syndrome
- Decompression Sickness (Bends)
- Diabetic & Other Non-healing Wounds
- Enhancement of Healing in Selected Problem Wounds
- Exceptional Anemia: Resulting of Bleeding
- Gas Gangrene
- Intracranial Abscess
- Osteomyelitis
- Radiation Injury
- Refractory Osteomyelitis
- Thermal Burns
- Idiopathic Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss

HBOT is used "off-label" for various disease states and disorders and HBOT may be ordered by a physician for off-label indications. Hyperbaric Centers of Florida makes no claims as to the efficacy for any indications other than the fifteen approved by FDA.

## Common Off-Label Indications:

- Autism
- Brain Injury
- Bells Palsy
- Cerebral Palsy
- Cosmetic Surgery
- Infections
- Inflammations
- Lyme Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Nerve Injuries
- Oral Disease
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Scleroderma
- Shingles
- Severe Migraines
- Sports Injury
- Stroke
- Tendon Injuries
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Venomous snake and spider bites

To find out more, or to schedule your appointment today, please call Hyperbaric Centers of Florida at 813-788-3969.

## Reference:

1. DJ Wallace, "Use of hyperbaric oxygen in rheumatic diseases: case report and critical analysis." UCLA, aamhei.com/wp-content/uploads/bibliografia-cientifica/use-of-hyperbaric-oxygen-in-rheumatic-diseases-case-report-and-critical-analysis.pdf
2. Inamoto Y et al Effect of hyperbaric oxygen on macrophage function in mice. Biochem Biophys Res Commun 1991; 179: 886-891.

 **Hyperbaric Centers of Florida**  
[www.hyperbariccentersofflorida.com](http://www.hyperbariccentersofflorida.com)



# Gifting Intimacy Wellness and Female Health for Valentine's Day Makes Sense on Multiple Levels

By Parveen Vahora, M.D.

**T**wo Breakthrough medical procedures can help you and your partner feel better about your relationship and experience what you once had in the past. If you struggle with incontinence issues or vulvovaginal atrophy, two in-office, safe and effective advancements are available to help you feel whole again.

## VVA and Urinary Incontinence

Many women experience a shift in their bodies after childbirth, reproductive disorders, surgery, and aging. Have you ever felt that intercourse just wasn't pleasurable any longer? Maybe you are one of the millions of women that experience vulvovaginal atrophy (VVA).

When the regularity of a woman's menstrual cycle ceases, the estrogen receptors decrease along with estradiol in the uterine lining, disrupting the thickness and lubrication of the tissues. Estrogen increases gland secretion and blood flow to the urogenital tissues. When estrogen is limited or obsolete, it leads to vaginal dryness, pain, PH imbalance, and urinary changes such as overactive bladder and incontinence.

Due to the limited estrogen supply, the walls of the vagina start to thin out, causing dryness, burning, and inflammation. This can make intercourse very painful and can cause urinary disorders, interfere with daily activities, and completely disrupt your life due to the extreme pain and discomfort that it can cause.

Dr. Parveen Vahora explained, "MonaLisa Touch<sup>®</sup>, is a non-hormonal treatment, has no side effects, and only takes a few minutes to perform right in the convenience of my office, and it's helped countless women treat their vulvovaginal atrophy and associated symptoms and pain. Women can get their confidence and intimacy back. It also works well to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, decreasing urinary incontinence and urgency."

## MonaLisa Touch<sup>®</sup>

No medications, no cutting, no lengthy healing times: This innovative laser therapy is for VVA. It's quick, efficient, and can be safely performed in the comfort and privacy of Dr. Vahora's office. The laser does not hurt or cause any pain. You will only feel



slight vibrating sensations from the machine, and the best part is that the entire procedure is accomplished in an outpatient office setting. Women no longer have symptoms of dryness, pain, itching, or irritation.

## Weakened Pelvic Floor

Pelvic floor muscles are the layer of muscles that support the pelvic organs and span the bottom of the pelvis. Strong pelvic floor muscles give you control over your bladder and bowel. Weakened pelvic floor muscles mean your internal organs are not fully supported and you may have difficulty controlling the release of urine.

## EMSELLA™

EMSELLA™ is the key to effectively eliminating or significantly reducing urinary incontinence. EMSELLA is a unique chair that patients can simply sit and relax in (fully clothed) for 20 to 30 minutes in the comfort of their gynecologist's office. It produces vibrations that cause the pelvic floor muscles to contract. One session is the equivalent of doing 11,000 Kegel exercises.

EMSELLA utilizes electromagnetic energy to deliver thousands of supramaximal pelvic floor muscle contractions in a single session. These contractions re-educate the muscles of incontinent patients.

EMSELLA produces high-frequency vibrations with thousands of contractions per session that tighten the pelvic floor muscles and the bladder sometimes as quickly as the first treatment. Most women will undergo just six sessions in a full three-week program to restore their pelvic muscle strength. The best part is, 75% of treated patients totally eliminated or decreased the use of hygienic pads, and 95% of treated patients have an improved quality of life.

EMSELLA is for both for men and women, and can also improve frequency and urgency of urination, as well as reduce day and night leakage. It also improves sexual function in men and women.

Give yourself and your partner the Gift of MonaLisa Touch<sup>®</sup> or Emsella.

**Don't just live with your discomfort, get the relief and new beginning that you are worthy of. Call today to schedule an appointment and/or consultation at [Info@ParveenVahoraMD.com](mailto:Info@ParveenVahoraMD.com) or call (727) 376-1536.**

*New patients are welcome!*

*Schedule your consultation today. We also offer TeleHealth/Virtual consultations.*



**Parveen Vahora, M.D.**

Our gynecologist office is small, intimate, and welcoming. Women under our care are treated with the utmost respect, which means we offer personalized care: educating on conditions and treatment options as well as preventative measures. Our focus is on sexual health, and we're proud to offer the MonaLisa Touch<sup>®</sup> for patients going through menopause as well as post-menopausal women, breast cancer survivors, and those suffering from pain during intercourse or intense dryness. We also offer genetic testing for breast, ovarian, and colon cancer. From birth control to robotic surgery, we've got you covered.

Our practice treats our patients as we would treat our own family, with the goal of keeping them healthy for many years to come, not just the short-term. We follow Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS<sup>®</sup>) protocols, which take a comprehensive look at all areas of the patient's journey through surgery and recovery, creating a well-coordinated, team-oriented approach to surgical care for better outcomes. Weaving this into our personalized care plans, we get patients back to their normal routines faster.

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# WHOLEHEARTED

By Jodi Thomas

I love Valentine's Day. Not just the flowers and the chocolate and all that good stuff, but I have always loved the idea of celebrating *love* . . . and on a trivial note, seeing all the pink and red hearts just makes me happy for some reason.

Lately I've been thinking a lot about my own heart. When reflecting on 2023 and what I hope for this year, I really desire to live *wholeheartedly*. And the first step in doing this is learning to pay attention to my **heart**. I'm reading a great book right now called *Soulful Simplicity* by Courtney Carver. I highly recommend it. In the book, she discusses living wholeheartedly and that we have to learn to *listen* to our hearts. She has an exercise where in a quiet moment, you place both hands on your heart, one hand on top of the other, and just sit in the quiet for a moment or two, and ask yourself, "What is my heart saying? What is my heart feeling?"

Yet, most of us are terrified to do this. Why? Because, without a doubt, most of us are never taught to listen to our hearts. We are taught to "suck it up," to keep pushing forward, to fulfill our myriad responsibilities, regardless what our hearts might be saying, or trying to say. And there are many times where we have to do just that—it's part of being an adult. But there's an equal, if not more, need for us to listen to those precious hearts of ours, that have often long been covered up by obligation, fear of what other people think, busy-ness, and self-medication with our vices of choice.

The primary reason we need to learn to listen to our hearts are that our hearts are **very important to God**. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Think about what that says and the implication of it. Both good and bad flow from our heart, based upon the state of our heart. Ignore your heart for too long, and this is disastrous for living the kind of life that you once imagined for yourself.



In fact, our hearts are so valuable to God that they are the very place that Christ has decided to take up residence. Ephesians 3:17 says, "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ *may dwell in your hearts through faith*." Additionally, Romans 5:5 says that God pours out His love into our hearts. Now, I spend a lot of time nurturing my relationship with God. But to be completely honestly, many times I don't feel God's presence or love. These are things that I have to take *by faith*. But even this comes from the heart, for Romans 10:10 says "For it is *with your heart that you believe* and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."

When I truly believe these truths, which comes from my very heart, that Christ actually lives in my heart and God's love is poured into my heart, I am empowered to live in God's love and to express that love to others in my day to day life. And folks, there is just nothing in life more important than that.

Not only does God reside in our heart, he desires to protect it. Philippians 4:7 says "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, *will guard your hearts* and your minds in Christ Jesus." How does the peace of God guard our heart? It guards it against worry, against anxiety, against unforgiveness. . . all of the things that wreck havoc on our hearts and create stress in our lives.

Our hearts are so valuable to God, that He desires *all* of our hearts. In Luke 10:27, Jesus said the greatest commandment was to "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart* and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind."

When you see those pretty pink and red hearts this Valentines Day, I hope you are reminded that your heart is a unique treasure to God. There is no other heart like yours. It is so valuable to Him that Jesus died on the cross so that He could live there and God's love be poured out into your heart. Because your heart is of the utmost value to God, you need to value it, too. Learn to listen to it. Learn to respect it. Don't ignore it. I hope you will join me in the quest of living *wholeheartedly* in 2023.





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