

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

April 2026

Marion Edition - Monthly

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**THE HIDDEN
STRESS OF
HEARING LOSS**

**MOBILITY IS
MEDICINE**

**How Movement and
Occupational Therapy
Protect Vascular Health**

**APRIL IS NATIONAL
HEALTHCARE
DECISIONS MONTH**

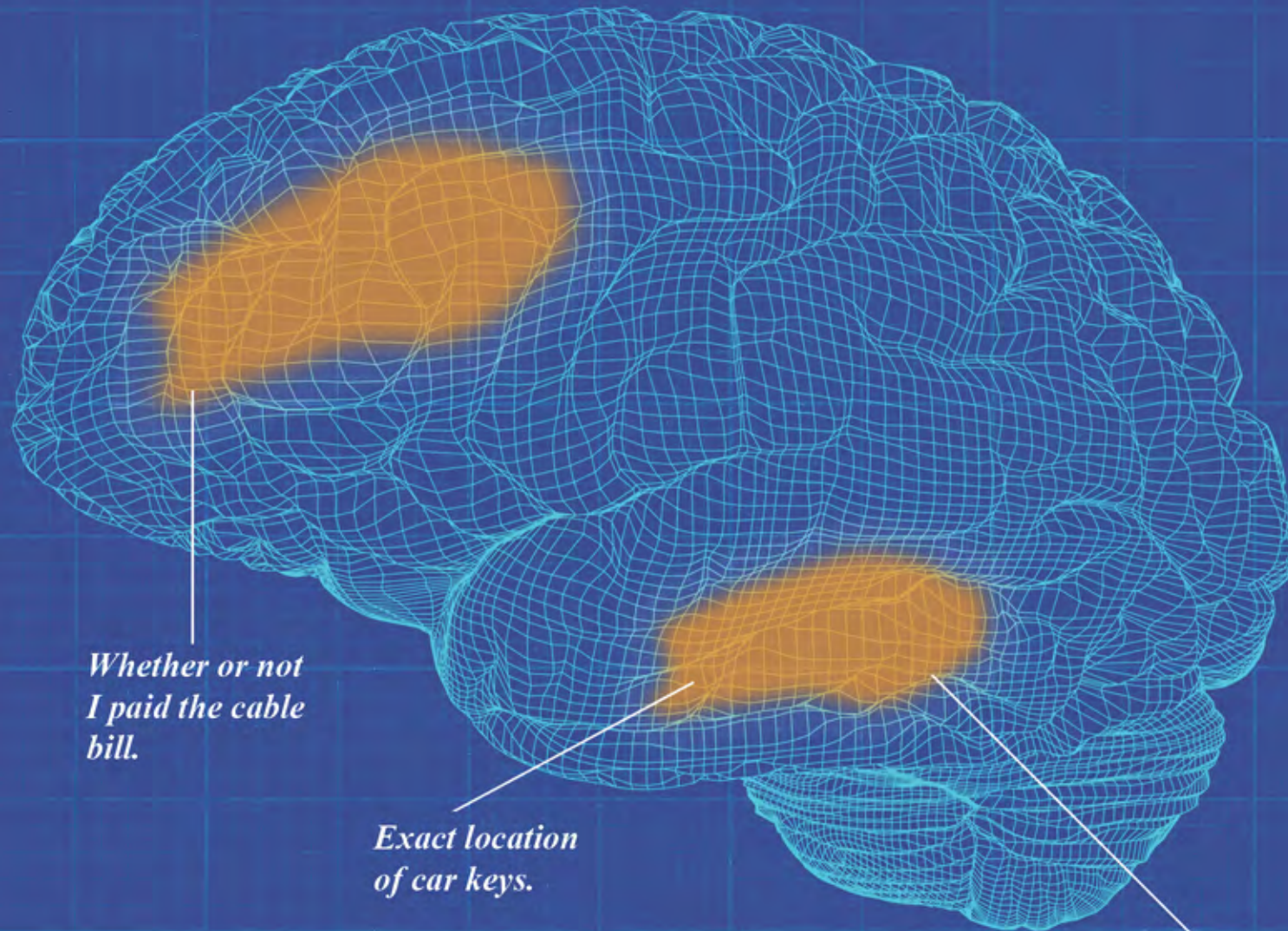
**DISCOVER
EXOMIND™**
Advanced
Brain Therapy
for Emotional
Wellness

**ARE CERTAIN
ALTERNATIVE
THERAPIES
EFFECTIVE FOR
PRIMARY CANCER
TREATMENT?**

**NUTRITION SUPPORT
IN WEIGHT LOSS
CLINICAL TRIALS**



KEEP YOUR BRAIN TOP OF MIND.



*Whether or not
I paid the cable
bill.*

*Exact location
of car keys.*

*Neighbor's
daughter's
name.*

GREY MATTER | *Fig. 17*

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DISCOVER EXOMIND™: ADVANCED BRAIN THERAPY FOR EMOTIONAL WELLNESS AT CHANDRA WELLNESS CENTER

By Dr. Tina Chandra

At Chandra Wellness Center, we believe that true beauty and wellness extend far beyond what meets the eye. While we're dedicated to helping you look your best, we're equally committed to supporting your mental and emotional health. That's why we're excited to introduce EXOMIND™, a groundbreaking drug-free therapy that's transforming how we approach mood enhancement, emotional regulation, and cognitive clarity.

What is EXOMIND™?

EXOMIND™ represents the cutting edge of neuroscience-based therapy. This FDA-cleared treatment harnesses the power of magnetic pulses to gently stimulate specific regions of the brain responsible for mood regulation and cognitive function. Unlike traditional pharmaceutical approaches, EXOMIND™ offers a non-invasive, medication-free pathway to better mental health and emotional balance.

The Science Behind the Innovation

The foundation of EXOMIND™ lies in neuroplasticity—the brain's remarkable ability to reorganize and form new neural connections throughout life. By delivering targeted magnetic stimulation, EXOMIND™ activates underperforming areas of the brain, encouraging the development of healthier neural pathways. This process helps restore the natural balance of brain activity that's often disrupted by stress, anxiety, depression, and other emotional challenges.

The therapy works by sending precise magnetic pulses through the skull to reach deep brain structures without any surgery or discomfort. These pulses encourage neurons to fire in patterns that promote improved mood regulation, sharper thinking, and greater emotional resilience.

Benefits You Can Experience

Patients undergoing EXOMIND™ therapy often report significant improvements across multiple areas. Many experience enhanced mood stability, finding it easier to navigate daily stressors with calm and composure. Emotional regulation becomes more manageable, reducing mood swings and negative thought patterns.

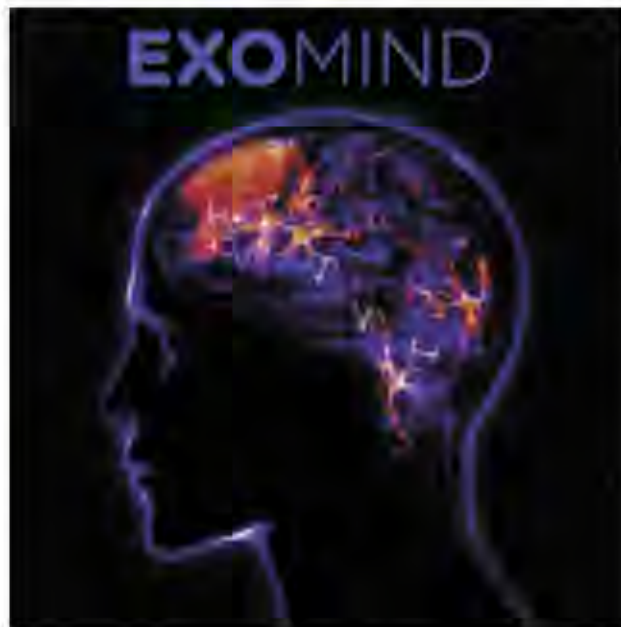
Cognitive benefits are equally impressive. Users frequently notice improved mental clarity, sharper focus, and enhanced decision-making. The therapy helps lift the mental fog that often accompanies chronic stress or depression.



A Holistic Approach to Wellness

What sets Chandra Wellness Center apart is our truly comprehensive approach to health. We understand that wellness isn't compartmentalized—your mental health affects your physical appearance, your emotional state influences your confidence, and your cognitive function impacts your quality of life. By offering EXOMIND™ alongside our aesthetic services, we provide a truly integrated wellness experience.

This therapy is particularly valuable for those seeking alternatives to medication or wanting to enhance existing treatment plans. With FDA clearance backing its safety and efficacy, EXOMIND™ offers peace of mind along with transformative results.



Your Journey to Better Mental Health

If you're ready to experience the proven benefits of advanced brain therapy, the team at Chandra Wellness Center is here to guide you. EXOMIND™ represents our commitment to supporting your total well-being—helping you feel as good as you look, from the inside out.

DR. TINA CHANDRA

Dr. Tina Chandra is committed to providing her patients with excellence and quality care using the latest technological advances. With her exceptional skill and unique training in cosmetic, neuromuscular (TMJ/TMD), physiologic, and sleep deprivation dentistry, Dr. Chandra is highly qualified. She attended the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry and earned her Graduate Fellowship from the prestigious Las Vegas Dental Institute for Advanced Dental Studies (LVI Global) and is considered an expert in her field, a distinction achieved by only 2% of dentists in America. She takes pride in staying up to date with cutting-edge procedures in the dental field. Dr. Chandra has always had a passion for Wellness and Aesthetics. In Addition to her successful Dental practice she manages her Medical Wellness Spa. She is a currently a national guest speaker for the medical device company, Body by BTL for health, wellness and aesthetics.



DR. RAVI CHANDRA

Ravi Chandra, MD, Ocala's leading vascular surgeon is the only surgeon in Ocala, Florida with outstanding credentials and is quadruple Board certified by the American Board of Endovascular Medicine, American Board of Vascular Medicine, the American Board of Surgery, and the American Board of Phlebology.



With over 30 years of experience and serving his patients with above standard and excellence in surgical care, Dr. Ravi Chandra is excited to branch out and offer wellness treatments to help his vascular patients with incontinence problems. He and his team are committed to bringing health and wellness back into your life.



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ARE CERTAIN ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES EFFECTIVE FOR PRIMARY CANCER TREATMENT?

How does cancer start? There are several leading theories that explain different ways that cancer may develop.

Among them are the Somatic Mutation Theory (SMT) — that cancer arises from a buildup of changes in a single cell, caused by such factors as genetics, aging or exposure to harmful chemicals. The Tissue Organization Field Theory (TOFT) suggests that cancer is driven by disruptions in tissue interactions — meaning that different parts of the body that normally work together aren't communicating or functioning properly.

Many standard cancer treatments are based on the SMT and target the DNA of cancer cells. For example, chemotherapy, radiation therapy and immunotherapies aim to destroy or slow the growth of cancer cells.

A 2024 study introduced the Mitochondrial-Stem Cell Connection (MSCC), a theory suggesting that when stem cells don't produce energy properly, they may begin to behave abnormally and could develop into cancer-forming cells. This is an emerging idea that researchers are still studying to better understand how cancers start and grow.

Some experimental approaches based on the MSCC theory aim to limit the energy cancer cells use.

While these treatments may have positive impacts in certain settings, it is still unproven whether they are effective for most patients with cancer; large-scale studies in humans are needed.

None of the following have been proven to be effective, especially as a primary cancer treatment:

- High-dose vitamin C has been studied for decades but has not shown to be effective in treating cancer.
- Ivermectin tablets are approved by the FDA to treat certain conditions caused by parasitic worms, and some topical forms are approved to treat head lice and other skin conditions. Phase 1 and 2 clinical trials show limited or no antitumor activity in humans with advanced cancer.
- Mebendazole is an oral medication used to treat parasitic worm infections, such as pinworm or roundworm. It works by stopping the worms from absorbing sugar (glucose), which they need to survive, eventually killing them. Researchers are exploring whether it may help slow the growth of certain cancer cells. However, a recent Phase 2 clinical trial showed no anticancer activity from its use in treating gastrointestinal cancers.

- Vitamin D and other vitamins and minerals may be combined with traditional cancer treatments after all drugs have been reviewed for possible interactions.

In addition to the lack of data supporting the effectiveness of these treatments, there are potential side effects and risks:

- High-dose vitamin C given intravenously can potentially cause kidney stones or heart problems and can sometimes promote cancer growth.
- Too much vitamin D may be dangerous, and overdose can lead to calcium buildup and kidney failure.
- Ivermectin in high doses can cause neurological side effects.
- Mebendazole can cause liver damage or low white blood cell counts, making infections worse.

Depending on the cancer diagnosis and genetic testing, treatment selection will vary. Currently approved treatments have been tested in robust clinical studies and shown to be effective.

The following are general recommendations that can enhance well-being and help to minimize side effects for patients during cancer treatment:

- 1. Maintain a healthy, balanced diet** focusing on whole foods, and limit intake of highly processed products or foods high in sugar.
- 2. Regular exercise**, including walking, yoga and Pilates, can help increase activity.
- 3. Various vitamin, mineral or herbal supplements** may be complementary to cancer treatment. Daily doses should remain within the recommended dietary allowances. Inform your health care providers of any new vitamins, supplements or alternative treatments before starting them to accurately investigate any possible interactions.
- 4. Aromatherapy with essential oils**, meditation or other alternative practices may be beneficial.

It is important to review all the facts and talk with your health care team to determine if an alternative treatment is right for you. False hope in a treatment that has not been shown to be safe and effective can potentially delay the start of a therapy proven to be effective — leading to poor outcomes.

WORLD-CLASS CANCER TREATMENT, CLOSE TO HOME
About Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute, LLC (FLCancer.com)

For more than 40 years, FCS 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.

In Marion County, board-certified physicians specializing in hematology, medical oncology, gynecologic oncology and radiation oncology provide personalized care for all forms of cancers and blood disorders. With extraordinary skill and experience, they deliver treatments with maximum effectiveness and safety, combined with compassion and concern for patients and their families. From genetic screening to immunotherapies and access to the latest clinical trials, our top-ranked cancer experts provide the newest and most advanced treatments available — increasing cure rates and extending lives.



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Ocala Cancer Center
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For more information, visit **FLCancer.com**.

The Hidden Stress of Hearing Loss

Stress is a part of everyday life. Work, relationships, and health concerns can all contribute to rising stress levels. But one often-overlooked cause of stress is **hearing loss**.

Hearing is essential for communication, and when it declines, everyday interactions become more difficult. Struggling to understand speech, missing important details, and feeling isolated can all lead to **increased anxiety, frustration, and even physical health problems**.

April is **Stress Awareness Month**, a time to recognize the impact stress has on our well-being. Understanding the link between **hearing loss and stress** is an important step toward improving overall health and quality of life.

How Hearing Loss Contributes to Stress

Hearing loss develops gradually, and many people don't realize how much effort they're putting into listening until fatigue sets in. This phenomenon, known as **listening fatigue**, occurs because the brain works harder to fill in the gaps when hearing isn't clear.

The result? **Mental exhaustion, frustration, and heightened stress levels**—all of which can take a serious toll on overall well-being.

Social Anxiety and Isolation

One of the most common effects of hearing loss is **social anxiety**. When people struggle to hear conversations, they often feel embarrassed asking others to repeat themselves. Instead of participating in discussions, they may choose to withdraw from social situations altogether.

This avoidance can lead to **loneliness and isolation**, both of which have been linked to increased stress and depression. A study from the *National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders* (NIDCD) found that **older adults with hearing loss are more likely to experience depression than those with normal hearing** (NIDCD, 2021).

Workplace Stress and Cognitive Overload

Hearing loss doesn't just affect social life—it can also impact job performance. Employees who struggle to hear clearly may experience **chronic stress due to misunderstandings, difficulty following conversations, and decreased productivity**.

According to a study by the Better Hearing Institute, **people with untreated hearing loss can earn up to \$30,000 less per year than those who treat their hearing loss due to reduced workplace effectiveness**

(*Better Hearing Institute, 2011*). The fear of missing important details or appearing less competent can create ongoing anxiety.

Additionally, untreated hearing loss **increases cognitive load**, meaning the brain has to work harder to process sound. This extra strain can lead to **memory issues, difficulty concentrating, and mental fatigue**, making daily tasks even more stressful.

The Physical Toll of Stress and Hearing Loss

Stress doesn't just affect emotions—it also has a direct impact on physical health. When the brain is constantly under pressure to interpret unclear sounds, the body responds by releasing **cortisol, the primary stress hormone**.

Over time, elevated cortisol levels can contribute to:

- **High blood pressure**
- **Increased risk of heart disease**
- **Weakened immune function**
- **Poor sleep quality**

A study published in *JAMA Otolaryngology* found that **untreated hearing loss is associated with a 21% increased risk of developing chronic stress-related conditions, including high blood pressure and heart disease** (Contrera et al., 2017).

Hearing Loss, Stress, and Cognitive Decline

One of the most concerning links between hearing loss and stress is its effect on **brain health**. Research from Johns Hopkins University found that **even mild hearing loss doubles the risk of dementia, while moderate to severe hearing loss increases the risk up to five times** (Lin et al., 2011).

When hearing loss goes untreated, the brain receives less auditory stimulation, which can lead to cognitive decline. Combined with stress and social withdrawal, this creates a **dangerous cycle that accelerates memory loss and mental decline**.

Reducing Stress Through Better Hearing

The good news is that **treating hearing loss can significantly reduce stress and improve quality of life**. Modern hearing aids enhance clarity, reduce background noise, and help people engage more comfortably in conversations.

Here's how improving hearing health leads to less stress:

1. **Effortless Communication** – Conversations become easier, reducing frustration and fatigue.
2. **Increased Social Confidence** – People feel more comfortable engaging in social settings and reconnecting with loved ones.

3. **Lower Cognitive Load** – The brain no longer has to work overtime to interpret sounds, improving mental clarity.

4. **Better Sleep and Relaxation** – Less daily stress leads to improved sleep quality and overall well-being.

5. **Improved Workplace Performance** – Clearer hearing means better communication, leading to less anxiety at work.

Take Action for a Stress-Free Life

If you've noticed increased stress, frustration, or fatigue due to hearing difficulties, now is the time to take action. A comprehensive hearing evaluation can determine the best solution to help you **hear clearly, feel less stressed, and improve your overall health**.

At **AudioNova**, we specialize in helping people reconnect with the world through expert audiology care. Our team of **Doctors of Audiology** provides personalized solutions using the latest hearing technology.

This **Stress Awareness Month**, take a step toward a **healthier, more stress-free life**. A simple hearing test could be the key to reducing stress, improving brain health, and bringing joy back to everyday interactions.

Schedule a free hearing test today and take control of your stress and hearing health.

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HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY: 5 Questions Every Patient Should Ask

By Mohammed Elamir, MD, FACP

We've all experienced some of the more unpleasant side effects of aging: Forgetting the name of a song, groaning when we bend over to pick up an object, or struggling to keep up with the kids or grandkids. As we age, maintaining brain health, mobility, and overall vitality all become much higher priorities than they were in our youth.

One specific therapy has drawn recent attention for its potential to help us preserve cognitive function, support recovery, and optimize wellness, especially in older adults. Published clinical research indicates that hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) can help the brain recover after stroke or traumatic brain injury, support neurological conditions like PTSD, and even reverse the effects of aging deep within our cells.

But as interest in HBOT grows, so does a common concern: **How can you be sure a hyperbaric clinic is safe and effective?**

As a physician who has guided thousands of patients through hyperbaric oxygen therapy, I know how overwhelming it can feel to choose the right clinic. To make the process easier, here are five essential questions you can ask to feel confident in your care decision.

1. Is the Facility Accredited?

Not all hyperbaric care and equipment is created equally. There are thousands of facilities that offer oxygen treatment, but their commitment to medical oversight, safety, and staff training can vary significantly. Standards vary widely from state to state, and regulations often go unenforced.

For patients, especially seniors, safety is paramount. Treatments involve pressurized oxygen, which must be carefully monitored to avoid complications or safety risks.

Independent accreditation shows that a clinic meets rigorous standards for patient safety, medical protocols, staff qualifications, and facility maintenance. In hyperbaric medicine, accreditation by the Undersea & Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS) is recognized as the gold standard. Fewer than 150 clinics in the United States hold this accreditation, which is the only hyperbaric certification recognized by The Joint Commission. Recently, Aviv Clinics in The Villages earned UHMS accreditation, making it the first U.S. center focused primarily on neurological and aging-related conditions to achieve this distinction.

2. Is a Trained Physician Present During Every Session?

Before choosing a clinic, it's also important to understand the level of medical oversight provided. Like any medical intervention, hyperbaric oxygen therapy carries risk. At a minimum, clinics should provide on-site physician supervision during every session to manage any medical issues that may arise.



A medical team member assists patients in the HBOT suite at Aviv Clinics in The Villages

Every hyperbaric session at Aviv Clinics is supervised by physicians trained in hyperbaric medicine, with medical personnel inside the HBOT suite throughout treatment. These practices ensure that safety is maintained at every step, providing peace of mind for patients and their families.

3. Are the Treatment Protocols Based on Clinical Research?

The science behind a clinic's hyperbaric protocols matters. Facilities led by physician-scientists who conduct clinical trials are more likely to deliver safe, evidence-based treatment.

The protocols used at Aviv Clinics are the result of nearly two decades of research and peer-reviewed studies. CEO and Chief Medical Officer Amir Hadanny, MD, PhD, has dedicated his career to studying HBOT's effects on the brain and body and translating that research into patient care. This combination of science and clinical expertise ensures that treatments are refined according to the latest scientific evidence.

4. Will My Care Plan Be Personalized to My Needs?

Every patient's needs and treatment goals are unique. Avoid clinics that offer one-size-fits-all HBOT programs. Clinics that perform thorough pre-treatment evaluations of your physical, cognitive, and neurological function are far more likely to deliver meaningful results.

Thorough cognitive, neurological, and physical assessments guide the individualized treatment plans offered at Aviv Clinics. Therapy is tailored to each client's goals and health profile. This level of personalized care ensures that HBOT is used strategically, maximizing its benefits for both brain and body.

5. Does the Program Include Multiple Therapies to Help My Results Stick?

Evidence suggests that hyperbaric oxygen therapy works best as part of a holistic approach. Programs that combine HBOT with lifestyle interventions, targeted physical training, nutrition guidance, and daily cognitive training create an environment that supports lasting improvements.

The multidisciplinary Aviv Medical Program blends an evidence-based HBOT protocol with tailored physical, cognitive, and nutritional strategies. This holistic approach bolsters the effects of HBOT, helping clients see tangible improvements in brain function, physical mobility, and overall vitality.

Choose Your Care With Confidence

If you're exploring hyperbaric oxygen therapy, knowing what questions to ask can make all the difference. Accreditation and medical oversight are strong indicators of quality, safety, and expertise. UHMS accreditation shows that treatments meet rigorous standards, and research-driven protocols and personalized programs help deliver tangible benefits.

Adults seeking safe, evidence-based hyperbaric care can feel confident when they are in the hands of physicians who not only practice hyperbaric medicine but helped develop the standards of care in the field. Choosing a clinic that combines accreditation, medical oversight, research leadership, individualized care, and a comprehensive program provides the peace of mind everyone deserves while pursuing an active, vibrant life.



About Dr. Elamir:

Dr. Mohammed Elamir ("Dr. Mo" to his patients) is a board-certified internal medicine physician specialized in hyperbaric oxygen therapy. He holds more than a decade of clinical experience treating complex, chronic medical conditions, with a specialized

focus on brain health, cognitive function, and neurologic recovery.

At Aviv Clinics in The Villages, Dr. Elamir works closely with patients experiencing stroke-related cognitive decline, post-concussion syndrome, traumatic brain injury (TBI), early dementia, and age-related changes in memory, attention, and executive function. Aviv Clinics is the most active hyperbaric facility in the nation and the only independently operated UHMS-accredited clinic in Florida.



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Look for hyperbaric clinics that display the UHMS seal of accreditation

NUTRITION SUPPORT IN WEIGHT LOSS CLINICAL TRIALS

Weight loss is more than a number on a scale—it's a comprehensive lifestyle journey that encompasses nutrition, physical activity, mental well-being, and sustainable habits. For those participating in weight loss clinical trials, access to professional dietitians represents a significant advantage that can transform not only trial outcomes but participants' relationship with food and health for years to come.

Clinical trials investigating weight loss interventions increasingly recognize that sustainable results require expert nutritional guidance. This personalized approach addresses the reality that weight management is highly individualized, with factors including metabolism, genetics, lifestyle, medical conditions, and psychological aspects all playing crucial roles.

The Dietician Advantage

Professional dietitians bring evidence-based expertise to weight loss trials, providing participants with tailored nutrition plans rather than one-size-fits-all approaches. These nutrition professionals assess individual needs through comprehensive evaluations of medical history, current eating patterns, lifestyle factors, and personal preferences before creating personalized recommendations.

Unlike general nutritional advice found online, dietitians in clinical trials offer ongoing support, adjusting strategies based on progress and challenges. This continuous refinement helps participants navigate plateaus, setbacks, and lifestyle changes that inevitably occur during weight loss journeys.

Beyond Calorie Counting

Modern nutritional science has moved well beyond simple calorie counting. Dietitians in weight loss trials focus on nutrient density, meal timing, macronutrient balance, and dietary patterns that support metabolic health. They help participants understand food quality, teaching them to distinguish between processed foods and nutrient-rich alternatives.

Participants learn about the glycemic impact of different foods, protein requirements for preserving muscle mass during weight loss, healthy fat sources that support hormonal balance, and appropriate carbohydrate choices for sustained energy. This comprehensive education transforms how participants



view food—not simply as calories to restrict but as nourishment that affects everything from energy levels to mood.

Behavioral Change Support

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of dietician support in weight loss trials is assistance with behavioral change. Sustainable weight management requires transforming deeply ingrained habits, navigating emotional eating patterns, and developing new coping mechanisms for stress and social situations.

Dietitians employ motivational interviewing techniques, cognitive behavioral strategies, and practical tools like meal planning and preparation skills. They help participants identify triggers for unhealthy eating behaviors and develop practical alternatives that work within real-life constraints.

Long-Term Health Benefits

The nutritional guidance received during weight loss trials extends far beyond weight management. Participants often experience improvements in cardiovascular health markers, blood glucose control, inflammatory markers, and digestive health. Many report enhanced energy levels, better sleep quality, improved mood, and reduced symptoms from chronic conditions.

These comprehensive benefits highlight why weight loss trials with dietician support focus on overall health enhancement rather than simply reducing numbers on a scale. This holistic approach acknowledges that true health encompasses physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

A Lasting Education

Perhaps the most significant benefit of dietician access during weight loss trials is the lasting education participants receive. Unlike temporary diets that end when the program concludes, the knowledge and skills acquired through professional nutrition counseling can serve participants for a lifetime.

Participants learn to navigate food choices independently, read nutrition labels critically, prepare healthy meals efficiently, and adjust their approach as life circumstances change. This nutritional empowerment transforms trial participation from a temporary intervention into a foundation for sustainable lifestyle change.

For those considering participation in weight loss clinical trials, the inclusion of professional dietician support represents an invaluable opportunity to gain personalized nutrition expertise that can benefit health outcomes far beyond the trial's conclusion.

About Renstar Medical Research

Founded in 1997, Renstar Medical Research has been at the forefront of clinical research, dedicated to advancing medical breakthroughs through high-quality, multispecialty clinical trials. With over two decades of experience, we have conducted studies across a wide range of therapeutic areas, including obesity, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, psoriasis, and other conditions.

Through innovation, expertise, and a patient-centered approach, we strive to make a meaningful impact on global healthcare. At Renstar Medical Research, we are seeking tomorrow's answers to the health questions of today.

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- Other criteria may apply



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MOBILITY IS MEDICINE:

How Movement and Occupational Therapy Protect Vascular Health

By The Vein Center of North Florida

When most people think about vascular disease, they picture the heart. But two of the most common — and most preventable — vascular conditions live far below it: peripheral artery disease (PAD) and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI). Both are profoundly influenced by one factor that's entirely within reach: how much you move.

The Vicious Cycle of Stillness

Healthy veins depend on the calf muscle pump — a natural mechanism activated every time you walk or flex your foot. With each step, calf muscles squeeze the deep veins, pushing blood upward toward the heart against gravity. When that pump stalls due to inactivity or mobility limitations, blood stagnates. Vein walls stretch, valves weaken, and pressure builds — leading to swelling, aching, skin changes, and in advanced cases, venous ulcers.

For CVI patients, limited mobility isn't just a symptom. It accelerates disease progression.

Walking Is the #1 Therapy for PAD

Peripheral artery disease occurs when plaque narrows the leg arteries, reducing blood flow. The hallmark symptom is claudication — cramping in the calves or thighs during walking that eases with rest. Pain often causes patients to stop walking altogether, which is a dangerous trade-off.

Clinical research consistently identifies supervised walking exercise as the gold-standard treatment for PAD. Regular walking stimulates collateral blood vessel growth — natural bypass routes that improve circulation even as primary arteries remain narrowed. It also reduces pain severity and lowers cardiovascular risk.

The approach: walk to the point of discomfort, rest briefly, then walk again. Practiced regularly, this interval method produces measurable vascular improvements within weeks.

The Role of Occupational Therapy

For patients whose pain, stiffness, or swelling limits independent movement, occupational therapy (OT) bridges a critical gap. OT professionals assess how vascular disease affects daily functioning and develop individualized strategies to keep patients active.

Key interventions include:

- Therapeutic exercise programs tailored to tolerance, gradually building activity without injury
- Compression garment training to ensure correct use of gradient stockings for venous return
- Energy conservation techniques that reduce fatigue while sustaining circulation-supporting movement
- Adaptive equipment for patients with balance issues or wound complications

OT doesn't just treat disability — it prevents it from deepening.

Posture, Ergonomics, and Daily Routine

Small habits carry large vascular consequences. Crossing the legs restricts venous flow. Sitting still for hours stalls the calf pump. Prolonged standing without movement causes the same pooling.

Practical adjustments make a real difference: elevating legs during rest, performing ankle pumps at your desk, and breaking up sedentary time every 30–60 minutes. For higher-risk individuals — those with obesity, diabetes, prior DVT, or family history — structured daily movement isn't optional. It's protective medicine.

Tools That Support Lower-Extremity Circulation

Several evidence-based tools help maintain vascular health between visits:

- Gradient compression stockings (15–30 mmHg or higher, as prescribed)
- Pneumatic compression devices for advanced CVI or lymphedema
- Pedometers or step-tracking apps to reinforce daily walking goals
- Leg elevation wedges for rest periods
- Resistance bands for calf and ankle strengthening

For vascular patients, movement is medicine. Whether you're managing PAD, CVI, or working to prevent either, the prescription is the same: keep moving, stay supported, and work with specialists who understand how deeply circulation and activity are connected.

To learn more about vascular health, treatment options, and personalized care plans, contact Surgical Specialists of Ocala & The Vein Center of North Florida today.



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Patricia D. Hurst, ARNP-BC

In addition to our physician, physician assistants and nurse practitioners, we also have two full-time RVTs (certified vascular techs) to serve you. The Vein Center of North Florida is International Accreditation Commission (IAC) accredited for vascular testing. The IAC develops standards for evaluating quality of care and provides peer review processes. Maintaining IAC accreditation is our way of pursuing the highest level of excellence in patient care.

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IBS Awareness Month

What Your Gut is Trying to Tell You

By Gene Turner, MD, FAARFM

April is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) Awareness Month — a time dedicated to shedding light on one of the most common yet misunderstood gastrointestinal conditions affecting millions of Americans. At Mid-Florida Age Management, we believe that awareness is the first step toward better health and a significantly improved quality of life. This month, we want to make sure our community has the information they need to recognize IBS, understand its impact, and seek the right care.

What Is IBS?

Irritable Bowel Syndrome is a chronic functional gastrointestinal disorder that primarily affects the large intestine. Unlike inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, IBS does not cause visible damage to the digestive tract. However, it can cause significant discomfort and seriously disrupt daily living.

The most common symptoms include abdominal cramping, bloating, excess gas, diarrhea, constipation, or an unpredictable combination of both. Symptoms can range from mild and manageable to severe and debilitating, often fluctuating over time. IBS affects approximately 10 to 15 percent of adults in the United States, with women being diagnosed at higher rates than men.

Why IBS Often Goes Undiagnosed

Many people live with IBS for years without receiving a proper diagnosis. Because symptoms can closely mimic other conditions and vary widely from person to person, IBS is frequently overlooked or dismissed by both patients and providers. Many individuals feel embarrassed discussing digestive issues openly, leading them to suffer in silence rather than seek the care they deserve. This Awareness Month, we want to help break that stigma and encourage honest conversations about gut health.

Common Triggers to Watch For

While the exact cause of IBS remains unclear, several factors are known to trigger or worsen symptoms. Stress and anxiety play a particularly significant role, as the gut and brain are deeply connected through what is known as the gut-brain axis. Certain foods — including dairy products, gluten, high-fat meals, caffeine, and artificial sweeteners — can aggravate symptoms for many people.



Hormonal fluctuations, especially in women during menstrual cycles or perimenopause, are also linked to IBS flare-ups. Additionally, imbalances in the gut microbiome, a history of gastrointestinal infections, and a sedentary lifestyle may all contribute to the condition. Keeping a symptom journal can be a helpful first step in identifying your personal triggers.

How Mid-Florida Age Management Can Help

At Mid-Florida Age Management, we take a comprehensive, patient-centered approach to digestive health. We understand that IBS is not a one-size-fits-all condition, and what works for one person may not work for another. Our team works closely with each patient to identify personal triggers, assess hormonal contributors, and build individualized management plans that address the whole person — not just the symptoms.

Treatment options may include dietary modifications such as the low-FODMAP diet, stress management strategies, gut-supportive supplementation, hormone evaluation, and personalized lifestyle coaching.

Take the First Step Toward Feeling Better

If you have been living with recurring abdominal pain, unpredictable bowel habits, or persistent bloating, you do not have to accept that as your normal. IBS is highly manageable with the right guidance and support.

This April, listen to your gut and take action. Contact Mid-Florida Age Management today to schedule a consultation — because your gut health is worth prioritizing.

About the Author

"Gene" Turner, MD is a board-certified physician, advanced fellowship-trained in Regenerative and Functional Medicine and a diplomate of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, with over 25 years of clinical experience. Dr. Turner graduated from the University of Arizona College of Medicine and received residency training at Vanderbilt University. He is the medical director of Mid-Florida Age Management.

Your wellness doctor in Ocala is Board Certified by the American Board of Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine and is fellowship trained in Metabolic and Nutritional Medicine. He has also received certification as Therapeutic Lifestyle Practitioner through Metagenics FirstLine Lifestyle Medicine Program. The CDC and NIH recommend Lifestyle Treatment Programs for such lifestyle conditions such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, poor glucose control and overweight. Such programs require time and expertise to develop and implement: our programs include addressing diet, exercise, stress management, sleep issues, nutritional supplementation where indicated and correction of metabolic deficits when detected. Evidence-based programs are used to assess, interpret, and recommend proven integrative protocols which dramatically increase patient adherence and engagement level. The effect is a symbiotic relationship between practitioner and patient, resulting in patient centered care and higher levels of wellness.

Dr. Turner uses conventional, nutritional, complementary and alternative modalities. He specializes in hypertension, lipid disorders, prevention of cardiovascular disease, nutritional and weight management, and clinical age management. He has a special interest in anti-aging medicine for which he uses a combination of natural and prescriptive therapies.

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HEEL PAIN HOLDING YOU BACK?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PLANTAR FASCIITIS

By Dr. Andrew Franklin, DPM, PH.D

If you've ever taken your first steps out of bed in the morning and felt a sharp, stabbing pain in the bottom of your heel, you may already be familiar with plantar fasciitis — one of the most common causes of heel pain treated at Ocala Podiatry. While this condition can be frustrating and limiting, the good news is that with the right care and guidance from a qualified podiatrist, most patients experience significant relief.

What Is Plantar Fasciitis?

The plantar fascia is a thick band of tissue that runs along the bottom of your foot, connecting your heel bone to your toes. Its job is to support the arch of your foot and absorb the shock of every step you take. When this tissue becomes overstretched or overloaded, small tears develop in the fascia, triggering inflammation and pain — a condition known as plantar fasciitis.

The result is often a deep, aching or stabbing heel pain that tends to be worst first thing in the morning or after periods of rest, then gradually improves as you move around. However, extended periods of standing or walking can also cause a flare-up throughout the day.

Who Is at Risk?

Plantar fasciitis doesn't discriminate — it affects people of all ages and activity levels. However, certain factors can increase your likelihood of developing the condition:

- **Age:** Plantar fasciitis is most common in adults between the ages of 40 and 60.
- **High-impact activity:** Runners, hikers, and athletes who engage in repetitive foot strike activities place extra stress on the plantar fascia.
- **Foot mechanics:** Flat feet, high arches, or an abnormal walking pattern can place uneven pressure on the fascia over time.
- **Occupation:** Jobs that require long hours of standing on hard surfaces — such as teachers, nurses, factory workers, and retail employees — significantly elevate the risk.
- **Excess weight:** Carrying additional body weight increases the load placed on your plantar fascia with every step.
- **Improper footwear:** Worn-out shoes, high heels, or footwear that lacks adequate arch support can be a contributing factor.

Living in Ocala means staying active — whether you're walking Silver Springs State Park trails, spending time on the golf course, or keeping up with a busy work schedule. When heel pain gets in the way, it's worth addressing sooner rather than later.

Diagnosing Plantar Fasciitis

At Ocala Podiatry, diagnosis typically begins with a thorough physical examination and a detailed discussion of your symptoms, activity level, and footwear habits. In some cases, imaging such as X-rays or an ultrasound may be used to rule out other causes of heel pain, such as a stress fracture or heel spur.

It's important not to self-diagnose or ignore persistent heel pain. What feels like a minor ache can worsen considerably if left untreated, potentially leading to chronic pain and changes in your walking pattern that cause secondary issues in your knees, hips, or back.

Treatment Options

Most cases of plantar fasciitis respond well to conservative, non-surgical treatment. The team at Ocala Podiatry takes a personalized approach, tailoring a treatment plan to your specific needs and lifestyle. Common treatment strategies include:

- **Stretching and Physical Therapy:** Targeted stretches for the calf muscles and plantar fascia can significantly reduce tension and promote healing. A physical therapist may also use techniques to improve foot mechanics and strengthen supporting muscles.
- **Custom Orthotics:** Custom-fitted shoe inserts are designed to redistribute pressure across your foot and provide the arch support your plantar fascia needs to recover. Unlike over-the-counter insoles, custom orthotics are built specifically for your foot's unique structure.
- **Anti-Inflammatory Measures:** Ice therapy, rest, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications can help manage pain and swelling, particularly in the early stages of treatment.
- **Night Splints:** Wearing a splint while sleeping keeps the plantar fascia gently stretched overnight, reducing the painful stiffness many patients experience with their first morning steps.
- **Corticosteroid Injections:** For moderate to severe cases that don't respond to initial treatment, a carefully placed cortisone injection can provide fast-acting relief by reducing inflammation directly in the affected area.

- **Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT):** This non-invasive procedure uses sound waves to stimulate healing in chronic plantar fasciitis cases and has shown strong results for patients who haven't improved with other conservative methods.

Surgical intervention is rarely necessary and is only considered after exhausting all conservative options over an extended period.

Prevention Tips

While plantar fasciitis can't always be prevented, you can reduce your risk by wearing supportive footwear, replacing athletic shoes regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, gradually increasing your exercise intensity, and stretching your feet and calves before and after physical activity.

When to See a Podiatrist

If heel pain is disrupting your daily life — keeping you off your feet, affecting your work, or limiting the activities you enjoy — it's time to seek professional care. At Ocala Podiatry, our experienced podiatric team is dedicated to helping you get back on your feet comfortably and confidently. Don't let plantar fasciitis slow you down. Contact our office today to schedule a consultation.

About Dr. Andrew Franklin, DPM, Ph.D

Dr. Andrew Franklin, DPM, Ph.D., moved from Essex, UK to the US in 2007, completing his post-doctorate in Organic Chemistry at FSU. He studied Podiatric Medicine at Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine and completed surgical residency at Cleveland Clinic. Relocating to Ocala in 2018, he opened Ocala Podiatry in December 2023. This board-certified podiatrist emphasizes patient education and teamwork. Married with two boys, he enjoys pickleball, sports, traveling, and outdoor activities.



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UNPLUG TO POWER UP:

Why digital balance matters for mental health

By Elizabeth Dosoretz, LCSW

We live in a world that rarely slows down.

Between packed schedules, constant notifications and the pressure to stay informed and connected, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. Many of us move from one thing to the next without ever stopping to take a breath.

There is often an unspoken expectation to always be on, available, responsive and productive. That expectation is not realistic or sustainable. Feeling tired or overwhelmed does not mean you are failing. Not every day will feel productive, and that is okay. Taking care of your health, mentally and physically, should remain the top priority.

Sometimes what we really need is permission to pause. Setting thoughtful boundaries, especially around technology, can help reduce stress and support both our mental and physical well-being.

Digital overstimulation plays a major role in burnout and stress. Screen time adds up quickly through online shopping, group chats, social media, emails and documenting everyday life. At the same time, we are constantly exposed to curated content from companies, colleagues, friends and even family. Over time, this can quietly shape expectations and fuel comparison, making it feel as though everyone else is doing more or coping better.

At the same time, digital balance does not mean eliminating technology or disconnecting completely. It means being intentional about how, when and why we engage with digital tools. When technology use is unregulated, it can increase mental load, disrupt focus and keep the nervous system in a constant state of alert. When balanced, it can support connection and productivity.

Finding Your Balance

Part of what makes these patterns so difficult to change is how our brains are wired. Behavioral science research, including the work of Katy Milkman, shows that we naturally default to what is easy, familiar and immediately rewarding, such as scrolling or checking notifications.

Insight alone is rarely enough to create change. When our surroundings encourage constant engagement, even the best intentions can be



overridden by habit. Real and lasting change happens when we make small adjustments to our environment and routines, making healthier choices more natural.

These changes reduce friction, lower decision fatigue and help new behaviors stick without requiring constant self-monitoring or discipline.

It's why creating intentional digital boundaries can be so powerful. It does not mean deleting apps or giving up devices altogether. It means pausing long enough to ask yourself why you are reaching for your phone. Is it habit, boredom, stress or a genuine desire to connect?

When possible, replace mindless scrolling with something restorative. This might include writing a few thoughts down, spending time with someone you love or engaging in a favorite activity. Many types of activities can help reset your nervous system. These moments do not need to be long to be effective.

Small and well-timed changes are often far more sustainable than sweeping resolutions. A recent study published in *Jama Network Open* found that even short reductions in social media use can significantly reduce mental health symptoms in young adults. Less screen time has been associated with lower anxiety, improved sleep, better focus and more space for emotional processing that often gets buried in a constantly moving, digital world.

A healthier relationship with technology is possible, even if it feels difficult right now. After all, building digital balance does not mean giving something up forever. It means learning how to use technology in

a way that supports your mental health rather than draining it. With the right support, new habits can be formed and sustained over time.

Remember, the goal is not perfection. Simple steps like putting your phone away during meals, setting a tech free window before bed, turning off nonessential notifications or taking a short break from social media can create meaningful shifts. All of this is progress. Designing your environment to support these choices, rather than relying on willpower alone, makes change more realistic and lasting.

As you reflect on your habits, consider how technology truly makes you feel. What adds value, and what drains you? The digital world can be an incredible tool for connection and information, but it works best when used intentionally and balanced with other healthy habits. With consistency and self-compassion, it is possible to build a healthier relationship with technology.

Looking for support as you work on finding your digital balance? At Elite DNA Behavioral Health, we help individuals build healthier routines that support emotional well-being in a demanding, always-connected world. As one of the largest mental health providers, Elite DNA provides accessible, affordable mental health care through in-person and virtual services across Florida, Virginia, and Alabama. To learn more or request an appointment, visit EliteDNA.com.

About the Author

Elizabeth Dosoretz, LCSW, is the founder and CEO of Elite DNA Behavioral Health. As a mother of three, her personal journey through the challenges of postpartum depression inspired her to found Elite DNA to provide accessible, affordable mental health care to everyone.



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Understanding Basal Cell Carcinoma: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By David Kosiorek, PA-C

Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) is one of the most common types of skin cancer, affecting millions of people worldwide each year. At Lumen Dermatology, our experienced team encounters this condition frequently and wants to ensure patients understand the importance of early detection and proper treatment.

What is Basal Cell Carcinoma?

Basal cell carcinoma develops in the basal cells, which are found in the deepest layer of the epidermis. These cancers typically grow slowly and rarely spread to other parts of the body, making them highly treatable when caught early. However, if left untreated, BCCs can become locally invasive, causing significant tissue damage and disfigurement.

Recognizing the Signs

The Lumen Dermatology team emphasizes the importance of knowing what to look for when examining your skin. Basal cell carcinomas can appear in various forms:

- **Nodular BCC** presents as a pearly, dome-shaped bump with visible blood vessels. These lesions may develop a central depression or ulceration as they grow.
- **Superficial BCC** appears as a red, scaly patch that may resemble eczema or psoriasis. These are commonly found on the trunk and can be easily overlooked.
- **Morpheaform BCC** looks like a scar-like, firm, pale area with poorly defined borders. This type can be particularly challenging to detect and treat due to its appearance.
- **Pigmented BCC** contains brown, black, or blue pigmentation and may be mistaken for a mole or melanoma.

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA (BCC)



SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA (SCC)



Risk Factors and Prevention

Several factors increase the likelihood of developing basal cell carcinoma. Prolonged sun exposure and a history of sunburns, particularly during childhood, significantly elevate risk. Fair-skinned individuals, those with light-colored eyes and hair, and people over 50 are at higher risk. Additionally, exposure to radiation, certain chemicals, or having a compromised immune system can increase susceptibility.

Lumen Dermatology strongly advocates for prevention through sun protection. This includes wearing broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30, seeking shade during peak sun hours (10 AM to 4 PM), wearing protective clothing, and avoiding tanning beds entirely.

Treatment Options

When we diagnose basal cell carcinoma, several effective treatment options are available, including Mohs surgery, surgical excision, and superficial radiation therapy. The choice depends on the size, location, and type of BCC, as well as the patient's overall health.

The Importance of Professional Care

Regular skin examinations by our qualified team at Lumen Dermatology are crucial for early detection. Our professionals can identify suspicious lesions that patients might miss and provide appropriate treatment recommendations.

If you notice any new, changing, or concerning spots on your skin, don't hesitate to schedule an appointment. Early intervention leads to better outcomes and often simpler treatment procedures. Remember, basal cell carcinoma is highly curable when detected and treated promptly by experienced medical professionals.

Expert Dermatology Care for Your Skin

At Lumen Dermatology, we bring over 50 years combined experience in skin health. Our team specializes in diagnosing, treating, and preventing skin cancer. With a patient-centered approach, we provide personalized care to help you achieve and maintain healthy skin for life.

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incontinence, or mixed incontinence, and can be particularly beneficial for women post-childbirth or during menopause.

Clinical studies have demonstrated that Emsella can significantly reduce symptoms of urinary incontinence, improving quality of life for patients who

have struggled with this common condition. Many patients experience noticeable results after just a few sessions, with a significant reduction in accidents, urgency, and the need to frequently visit the bathroom. For those looking for a non-surgical solution to regain control over their bladder, Emsella offers a promising alternative to traditional treatments.

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BREAKTHROUGH IN NEUROPATHY TREATMENT: HOW SUMMUS LASER THERAPY OFFERS HOPE FOR NERVE PAIN SUFFERERS

Neuropathy is a debilitating condition that affects millions of people worldwide, causing chronic pain, numbness, and significant disruption to daily life. Traditional treatments have often fallen short of providing comprehensive relief, leaving patients searching for innovative solutions. Enter the Summus Laser, a cutting-edge therapeutic approach that is revolutionizing neuropathy treatment and offering new hope to those struggling with nerve-related pain.

Understanding Neuropathy: A Complex Challenge

Neuropathy is a condition characterized by damage or dysfunction of peripheral nerves, typically causing symptoms like burning pain, tingling sensations, muscle weakness, and sensitivity to touch. Common causes include diabetes, chemotherapy, autoimmune disorders, and physical injuries. The complex nature of nerve damage has historically made treatment challenging, with many patients experiencing limited success from conventional medical interventions.

The Summus Laser: A Technological Marvel in Pain Management

The Summus Laser represents a significant advancement in medical technology, utilizing high-powered laser therapy to address nerve pain at its source. Unlike traditional treatments that merely mask symptoms, this innovative approach focuses on cellular regeneration and healing. The laser delivers concentrated light energy deep into affected tissues, stimulating natural healing processes and promoting nerve repair.

Key Mechanisms of Summus Laser Therapy

1. Cellular Stimulation: The laser's precise wavelengths penetrate damaged nerve tissues, encouraging mitochondrial activity and accelerating cellular metabolism. This process helps restore normal cellular function and reduces inflammation.

2. Improved Circulation: By enhancing blood flow to damaged nerve areas, the Summus Laser helps deliver essential nutrients and oxygen, supporting the body's natural healing mechanisms.

3. Pain Reduction: The therapy triggers the release of endorphins and reduces pain-causing inflammatory markers, providing immediate and long-term relief for patients.

Clinical Evidence and Patient Outcomes

Numerous clinical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Summus Laser therapy in treating neuropathy. Patients report significant improvements



in pain levels, sensation restoration, and overall quality of life. Many individuals who previously struggled with chronic nerve pain have experienced remarkable recoveries, regaining mobility and reducing their dependence on pain medications.

Treatment Process and Expectations

A typical Summus Laser treatment protocol involves:

- Comprehensive initial assessment
- Customized treatment plan
- Multiple targeted laser sessions
- Gradual progression of healing and pain reduction

Most patients experience noticeable improvements within 4-6 treatment sessions, with continued benefits developing over subsequent weeks and months.

Advantages Over Traditional Neuropathy Treatments

The Summus Laser offers several distinct advantages:

- Non-invasive approach
- No significant side effects
- No pharmaceutical dependencies
- Targets root causes of nerve damage
- Supports long-term healing
- Relatively quick treatment sessions

Who Can Benefit?

Summus Laser therapy is particularly beneficial for patients with:

- Diabetic neuropathy
- Chemotherapy-induced nerve damage
- Peripheral nerve injuries
- Chronic pain conditions
- Reduced sensation in extremities

Future of Neuropathy Treatment

As medical technology continues to advance, the Summus Laser represents a promising frontier in nerve pain management. Its ability to stimulate natural healing processes offers hope to countless individuals who have struggled with traditional treatment methods.

Conclusion

For those battling neuropathy, the Summus Laser provides a beacon of hope. By combining advanced technological innovation with a deep understanding of cellular healing, this treatment approach is transforming how we conceptualize and address nerve pain.

Patients interested in exploring this revolutionary treatment should consult with qualified healthcare professionals specializing in laser therapy and neuropathic conditions to determine their individual suitability and potential treatment outcomes.

LaserLab provides safe, effective, non-surgical pain relief and regenerative healthcare services. Our Pain Therapy Specialists use state-of-the-art Class IV Therapeutic Lasers to treat patients suffering from long-term pain. Our advanced laser technology reduces pain and inflammation, enhances healing, and increases circulation with no surgery, drugs, or side effects.

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APRIL IS NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISIONS MONTH

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

Making your healthcare wishes known is a win for everyone involved in your care. That is why during National Healthcare Decisions Month, healthcare organizations across the country highlight the importance of having advance directives. April 16 is celebrated as National Healthcare Decisions Day. This is a national program designed to inspire, educate, and empower the public to plan for the unexpected medical crisis.

What better time than during National Healthcare Decisions Month to make your healthcare decisions known by completing an advance directive. It is better to have the discussion sooner than later when it may be too late. Talking with your loved ones about what you want to happen should you not be able to speak for yourself and identifying who you want to speak for you is a gift that only you can provide. Having advance directives in place provide peace of mind and avoids burdening families with wondering what loved ones would have wanted.

Just as preparing a will is optimal when we are of sound mind and body, so is preparing for future healthcare needs. Having to make decisions for others is complicated, especially when that person can no longer speak for themselves. However, many seem to procrastinate, especially when it comes to talking about end of life matters as only about one third of Americans have completed one. It is one of those topics most people would rather not discuss but should, ensuring that their medical wishes will be carried out.

What are advance directives? These are legal documents that include a living will or a durable power of attorney for healthcare, also known as a healthcare proxy. Either document allows you to give directions about your future medical care; think of it as a road map for your family and doctors. It is your right to accept or refuse prolonged medical care if you have a serious, sometimes terminal illness. Advance directives can protect this right if you ever become mentally or physically unable to choose or communicate your wishes due to an injury or illness. By law, the decision belongs to the patient – make your wishes known to your family, healthcare providers and caregivers; you can change or update it any time.



An advance directive can be as simple as a two-page Living Will or as lengthy as the Five Wishes, a detailed user-friendly booklet. In Florida, an advance directive requires neither an attorney nor a notary, just the writer's signature and that of two witnesses.

In summary, advance directives can:

- protect your rights to make your own medical choices, especially if you are unable to communicate.
- help families avoid the stress of making tough decisions.
- assist physicians and caregivers by providing guidelines for your care, and
- limit life-prolonging measures when there is little or no chance of recovery if that is your choice.



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Visit www.HospiceofMarion.org to download an advance directive at no charge.

Comprehensive Care: How OT/PT Professionals Integrate LSVT BIG and Vocal Techniques for Parkinson's Patients

Parkinson's disease presents unique challenges that extend beyond the characteristic tremors. Patients often experience reduced movement amplitude, slowed movements, and diminished vocal volume—symptoms that can significantly impact quality of life. While dedicated therapeutic approaches exist for each symptom, innovative healthcare teams are finding ways to provide comprehensive care even with limited resources.

The Power of LSVT BIG for Movement Rehabilitation

The Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT) BIG program has emerged as a gold standard intervention for addressing the movement difficulties associated with Parkinson's disease. This evidence-based approach focuses on amplitude—training patients to make bigger, more deliberate movements to counteract the shrinking motion patterns typical of the disease.

Occupational and physical therapists certified in LSVT BIG guide patients through intensive exercises designed to recalibrate their perception of movement. The program typically includes:

- Large, exaggerated limb and body movements
- High-effort, high-intensity exercises
- Functional movement training applicable to daily activities
- Consistent reinforcement of "Think BIG" as patients move

The effectiveness of LSVT BIG lies in its ability to leverage neuroplasticity—the brain's capacity to form new neural connections. Through consistent practice of amplified movements, patients can essentially rewire their motor systems to automatically produce larger, more controlled movements in everyday life.

Integrating Vocal Exercises Without a Speech Therapist

While LSVT LOUD is traditionally administered by speech-language pathologists, many facilities face staffing challenges that require adaptation. Forward-thinking OT and PT professionals have found effective ways to incorporate vocal exercises into their treatment sessions, ensuring patients receive comprehensive care.

During LSVT BIG exercises, therapists prompt patients to:

- Count repetitions loudly
- Verbalize movements with strong vocal projection
- Practice sustained "Ahhh" sounds during stretching components
- Use loud voices when describing or planning activities

This integrated approach maintains the crucial focus on vocal amplitude that would otherwise be addressed in formal speech therapy. While not a complete replacement for specialized speech services, these vocal components help prevent the common decline in speech volume and clarity that accompanies Parkinson's progression.

Creating Synergy Between Movement and Voice

The brilliance of combining vocal exercises with physical movements extends beyond convenience. Research suggests that simultaneous training of both systems creates a synergistic effect, with improvements in one domain supporting enhancements in the other.

When a patient practices large arm swings while counting loudly, they reinforce the core LSVT principle across multiple systems: bigger movements and louder voices. This dual-task approach also challenges cognitive function, providing additional benefits for patients who may experience cognitive changes as their disease progresses.

Practical Implementation in Daily Care

For therapy teams implementing this combined approach, consistency is key. Therapists establish clear cues like "BIG movement, LOUD voice" that patients can remember and apply independently. Take-home exercise programs include reminders about vocal projection, and family members are educated on the importance of encouraging both expanded movements and increased vocal volume.

Documentation of vocal performance, even in OT/PT notes, helps track this aspect of function over time. Simple metrics like the distance at which a patient's voice can be clearly heard provide valuable information about disease progression and treatment effectiveness.



Beyond the Clinic: Empowering Long-term Success

The ultimate goal of this integrated approach extends beyond clinical improvements. By embedding vocal exercises within physical therapy sessions, patients develop habits that continue in their daily lives. A patient who practices speaking loudly while performing exercises is more likely to maintain appropriate vocal volume when ordering at a restaurant or speaking with grandchildren.

This comprehensive care model represents the evolution of Parkinson's treatment—recognizing that the most effective interventions address multiple symptoms simultaneously and prepare patients for real-world success beyond the therapy room.

Innovative Therapies Group has certified hand therapists that specialize in specific treatments post ziloflex injections for duptyrens contractions and will help you to regain function post procedure.

Types of Treatment Available with Physical Therapy

- Assessment and Evaluation Programs
- Difficulty Walking
- Fall Prevention and Balance Retraining
- Fitness and Wellness Programs
- Functional Training
- Gait Training and Balance Programs
- Manual and Massage Therapy
- Neurological and Neurodegenerative Retraining
- Vestibular Rehabilitation



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MINDFUL MOVEMENT: HOW PILATES CULTIVATES SELF-LOVE AND INNER STRENGTH

Pilates offers more than just physical benefits—it's a pathway to cultivating genuine self-love in our busy lives. By creating a mindful connection between body and mind, this practice helps us honor ourselves holistically.

The Essence of Self-Love Through Movement

Self-love isn't just a trendy concept but an essential practice for a fulfilling life. It involves setting healthy boundaries, engaging in nurturing activities, and acknowledging your strengths without harsh judgment. Pilates naturally embodies these principles through mindful movement that encourages practitioners to be present, listen to their bodies, and treat themselves with patience and kindness.

Developing Self-Awareness

In our rushed daily routines, we often disconnect from our physical sensations. Pilates bridges this gap by requiring focused attention on every movement, breath, and muscle engagement. The precision and control in each exercise sharpen awareness of how your body responds, creating mindfulness that extends beyond class into everyday life. You'll begin noticing how stress affects your posture or where you hold tension, allowing you to make intentional choices that support your well-being.

Embracing Your Current Reality

At the heart of self-love is acceptance—embracing where you are without judgment. Pilates meets you at your current ability level, whether you're an experienced athlete or just beginning your fitness journey.

Rather than focusing on limitations, the practice encourages appreciation for what your body can accomplish, fostering self-compassion as you celebrate progress instead of striving for perfection.

Building Strength Inside and Out

While Pilates is renowned for developing core strength, improving posture, and enhancing flexibility, its benefits transcend physical fitness. The deliberate movements promote stress reduction through present-moment focus. As you progress, you build mental resilience alongside physical strength, learning to overcome challenges that boost confidence in both mind and body.

A Balanced Approach

Pilates emphasizes harmony between strength and flexibility, effort and ease. This mirrors self-love principles that seek balance within ourselves. The practice fits into busy schedules, offering structured yet flexible sessions that provide opportunities to reconnect with yourself. This commitment to movement-based self-care eventually influences other areas of life, helping maintain balance in relationships, work, and personal routines.

Healing Through Movement

For those recovering from injury or emotional challenges, Pilates provides accessible, low-impact movements that help restore mobility, build strength, and release tension. The practice offers a way to regain control and rebuild trust in your physical abilities, fostering self-compassion through gentle, intentional care.

Cultivating Gratitude

Through consistent practice, Pilates helps develop profound body appreciation rooted in respect and gratitude. Instead of focusing on perceived flaws, you learn to honor your body's unique capabilities, strength, and resilience. This appreciation extends beyond the studio, helping you approach life with more compassion toward yourself.

Pilates truly transcends typical exercise—it's a practice of self-love that nurtures mind, body, and emotional well-being through mindfulness and body awareness. With regular practice, you strengthen not just your core but your relationship with yourself, honoring your journey and cultivating compassion both on and off the mat. Begin your transformation today at Club Pilates Ocala, where expert instructors guide you through personalized sessions in a supportive community environment. Your journey to holistic wellness awaits—join us and discover the power of mindful movement.



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Stress Management Tips from Quick Care Urgent Care

If you have bouts of anxiety, stress, fear and nervousness, you're not alone. Stress and anxiety are a normal part of life and usually short-lived, but for 40 million Americans, it's a daily battle. Whether it's anxiety due to biological, psychosocial, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the treatment options usually include behavioral therapy, counseling, and various prescription medications that block or dull different areas of the brain.

The typical treatment options for anxiety, stress and depression are medications and counseling therapy. Some of the most common drug classes prescribed are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors, tricyclic antidepressants, and monoamine oxidase inhibitors. Widely known drugs, like Prozac, Zoloft, and Cymbalta affect how neurotransmitters affect the mood by lessening anxiety levels and creating a more serene outlook on life.

Medications are not always the best choice for all individuals and many people pair alternative methods with anti-anxiety drugs or alone to help stave off stressful episodes.

Take Time for Yourself

It might be difficult, but carving out time to relax, take a bath, take a walk or simply shut yourself in the a separate room for 10 minutes to do deep breathing exercises can reduce anxiety significantly and over time, you will most likely notice that these personal care methods will help you to become calmer throughout the day.

Get Moving

Talk with your physician about the right exercise plan for you. Most people can benefit from taking a brisk 30-minute walk or a 30-minute swim. Exercise increases circulation, reduces stress, it also improves nutrient and oxygen rich blood flow, and helps you build strength and to lose weight. If you can work out harder, it's extremely beneficial to get your heart rate up daily with cardiovascular exercise.

Meditation

Yoga helps to improve flexibility, blood flow, muscle strength, posture, immune function, bone health, decreases depressive episodes, and can regulate blood



pressure. Meditation also reduces stress, reduces anxiety, promotes emotional wellbeing, can help fight addictions, can generate health and improve immune function, it can stave off memory disorders and increase neuronal plasticity.

In order to overcome stress and pain, we need a well-rounded treatment protocol that incorporates, medication (if necessary), stress management, nutrition, exercise, meditation, hormone balancing and other therapies that can help to stabilize our systems.

Quick Care Urgent Care offers more than just urgent care services, and they are preparing to add much more to their already vast list of therapies and services for the Ocala community!

Quick Care Med Urgent Care

If your health needs are not emergent and in need of life-saving measures, the benefit of urgent care in comparison are numerous. To name a few, the wait time will be much shorter. For the most part, urgent care can see their patients within an hour. The cost is also much less with urgent care than it is with emergency room treatment. Quick Care Med urgent care provides you with the proper paperwork to follow up with your primary care physician or specialist, as urgent care takes initiatives to keep the line of communication open to make certain that your treatment is a top priority.

There are numerous reasons people go to urgent care, from sore throats, skin infections, school sports physicals, vaccinations, colds and flu, sprains, heat exhaustion, animal bites, dehydration, broken bones and much more. Before you go to the ER, consider if you could instead be treated at urgent care because of the numerous benefits to you and your loved ones.

Quick Care Med Walk-In Clinic & Urgent Care is a comprehensive urgent care clinic with multiple specialties to serve you. Quick Care Med has locations in Marion (Dunnellon and Ocala), Citrus (Crystal River, Inverness, Beverly Hills, and Homosassa), Levy (Williston), & Alachua (Newberry) counties, plus our newest location in Chiefland that provides immediate walk-in treatment to pediatric and adult patients for illnesses and injuries, wellness exams, and employer health services.

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(Just past Walgreens)

6341 N US 441, Ocala, FL 34475
(Across from John Deer)

2205 N Young Blvd, Chiefland, FL 32626

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THE NEW LUXURY ESSENTIAL: Sleeping Better Than Ever

By Richard W. Rozensky, DDS, D.ABDSM

In the evolving world of health and wellness, true indulgence is no longer defined by what we add to our days—but by how deeply we rest at night. Sleep, once treated as a biological necessity, has become the ultimate marker of a well-lived life. And at the center of this quiet revolution is an unexpected accessory: the custom dental sleep device.

For many, sleep apnea has long carried a clinical stigma—white labs, blinking monitors, and bulky equipment that feels more hospital-grade than home sanctuary. But today's approach reframes the conversation entirely. Modern dental sleep devices are discreet, elegant, and designed with comfort in mind, aligning seamlessly with a lifestyle that values refinement, restoration, and ease.

Sleep as the Highest Form of Self-Care

Luxury wellness isn't about extremes. It's about optimization—making subtle, intelligent choices that elevate everyday experiences. A dental sleep device does exactly that by working quietly in the background, allowing the body to breathe freely and rest uninterrupted.

Unlike traditional sleep equipment that can dominate a bedroom or disrupt intimacy, these devices are custom-crafted to fit the wearer precisely. There are no hoses, no noise, no visual clutter. Just a small, tailored appliance that supports natural airflow and promotes deeper, more restorative sleep.

The result? Waking up clear-headed, energized, and calm—without feeling like you've "done" anything at all.

A Bespoke Experience for the Modern Sleeper

Customization is the hallmark of luxury, and dental sleep devices are nothing if not bespoke. Each is designed from a simple detailed scan of the patient's bite, ensuring a fit that feels intuitive rather than intrusive.

This personalization transforms the experience from treatment to ritual. Putting the device in at night becomes as effortless as slipping on silk pajamas or dimming the lights. It's a quiet signal to the body: rest is coming.



For those who travel frequently, the appeal is even greater. Lightweight and portable, these devices slip easily into a carry-on—no special adapters, no explanations at airport security, no disruption to routine. Whether at home, in a boutique hotel, or halfway across the globe, restorative sleep travels with you.

The Aesthetic of Effortless Health

There is a growing shift in wellness culture away from performative health and toward understated optimization. The most coveted tools are the ones no one notices—but everyone feels.

Dental sleep devices fit seamlessly into this ethos. There's no outward sign, no nighttime spectacle. Partners sleep undisturbed. Bedrooms remain serene. The benefits unfold privately: fewer nighttime awakenings, smoother breathing, and mornings that begin without fog or fatigue.

This is wellness that doesn't ask for attention. It simply delivers.

Beyond Sleep: The Ripple Effect

When sleep improves, everything else follows. Mornings feel lighter. Focus sharpens. Workouts become more effective. Even mood and skin often reflect the change.

Rather than addressing symptoms one by one—fatigue, irritability, low energy—supporting sleep addresses the foundation. A dental sleep device becomes not a solution to a problem, but an investment in overall vitality.

In this way, it aligns perfectly with the modern wellness mindset: proactive, refined, and deeply personal.

Redefining What It Means to Treat Yourself

Indulgence has evolved. Today, it's less about excess and more about intention. It's choosing experiences that enhance life quietly but profoundly.

A dental sleep device may not sparkle or announce itself, but its impact is unmistakable. Night after night, it creates space for the body to do what it was designed to do—rest, recover, and renew.

In a world that demands so much of our waking hours, the most luxurious thing we can do may be to sleep—fully, deeply, and effortlessly.

And that kind of rest? That's the ultimate upgrade.

Meet Dr. Rozensky

As a Diplomate of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine and recognized as a qualified dentist by the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine, Dr. Rozensky earned his Doctorate of Dental Surgery degree from University of New York at Buffalo and then went on to serve our country in the United States Air Force, after which he has enjoyed private practice in General Dentistry for over 20 years. Dr. Rozensky now includes his passion for Sleep Dentistry in his practice and finds true joy in the life-changing care he is providing.

At Laurel Manor Dental and SleepCare, Dr. Richard Rozensky and the entire team work closely with you so that you may make informed decisions about your health. In addition to sleep dentistry, all aspects of general dental care and treatment including restorative, cosmetic, implant restoration, hygiene and Invisalign™ are provided.

From the moment you step in the door you will feel at ease. You will be welcomed by a warm and inviting atmosphere, combined with a professional and caring team. You will immediately recognize the emphasis on professionalism and quality, from the people who care for you to the technology used—this is the way dental care should be!

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FINDING A HEALTHY TEMPO FOR LIFE

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

In today's fast-paced world, everyone seems constantly busy and exhausted. Technology, meant to simplify life, has only accelerated our schedules, allowing us to pack even more into each day. We are not only busy—we are tired.

Many can relate to Job's ancient words: "I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil" (Job 3:26). What many of us need to do is discover a sustainable rhythm for life. It is time to step off the merry-go-round of overcommitment and find a pace we can maintain for the long haul.

Jesus' words to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:25-26 remind us that internal health matters as much as external appearance. We spend hours perfecting our looks—clothes, hair, makeup, workouts—yet often neglect the soul and spirit that define who we are. Just as musicians use a metronome to set the proper tempo, our lives need a balanced rhythm. Living life at full throttle leads to burnout; our bodies require rest.

The story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-42 illustrates this truth perfectly. As Jesus visited their home, Martha hurried about with preparations while Mary sat at the Lord's feet, listening. Frustrated, Martha complained that her sister had left her to do all the work alone. Jesus replied gently, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha was doing good things—serving and hosting—but at the wrong time. In the presence of Jesus, the most important priority was sitting and listening to Him. This encounter was the last time Jesus would visit their home on earth. Sometimes we must choose between two good options, and the better choice is the one that draws us closer to God.



An unhealthy pace affects more than our bodies. It drains us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, making it difficult to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Solomon warned, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Proverbs 4:23).

Who is setting the tempo of your life? Cultural expectations, family pressures, and personal ambitions can push us into unsustainable rhythms. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or exhausted, ask yourself: What is truly important now? Eliminate non-essentials and focus on what matters most.

If we lose our "why," we eventually lose our way. Busyness can lead to barrenness, leaving us empty inside. The invitation is to slow down, guard our internal life, and choose the better part—like Mary did.

Take a moment to ponder whether your current pace is healthy and sustainable. Put away distractions, especially phones, and make the most of precious moments with family. Technology is useful, but it should never replace real connection. Finding a healthy tempo allows us to endure for the long haul and experience the full life Jesus offers.

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