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Massage Envy Magazine

PLUS

Find out how
phoning a
friend boosts
your health

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Full-Body Benefits

Massage offers relief
from head to toe [PAGE 10](#)



Which
fat is
that?

5 DAILY
TIPS FOR
LIFELONG
HEALTH

Surefire
spirit lifters
in tough
times



Give Yourself a Timeout

For children who misbehave, a timeout sounds like the ultimate punishment. But for stressed-out adults, it's a dream come true. Try these simple and effective ways to relax:

- 1. **Meditate.** Sit in a relaxed position, in a calm atmosphere. Focus on soothing music, your own relaxed breathing or nothing at all.
- 2. **Journal.** Write down the daily events that caused you stress. Make sure to note the emotions you experienced and reflect on your entries.
- 3. **Massage.** Besides simply feeling great, regular professional massages can help improve circulation, lower blood pressure and help relieve tension headaches.
- 4. **Walk.** A little motivation and walking shoes are all you need to achieve total body rejuvenation. While walking, your body releases feel-good endorphins that help you think and feel better instantly.
- 5. **Soak.** A warm bath can help relax your muscles and your mind. Light an aromatherapy candle and play soothing music.



Your Summer Stay-cation

With ever-tightening budgets, a vacation might be the furthest thing from your wallet. Yet according to Expedia.com's 2008 Vacation Deprivation Survey, 39 percent of employed U.S. adults reported feeling better about their job after returning from vacation.

Money, shmoney. Use these tips for taking a vacation without ever leaving town.

- + **Plan as though you actually are going on a getaway.** Take time off work, buy a new outfit and a beach-worthy book. Pack your suitcase.
- + **Skip the plane tickets.** Find a nearby hotel with a

killer summer deal. Vacation = room service.

- + **Look for local attractions that you have never seen before.** Museums, parks, local theater productions or a little-known-tour of quirky spots in town.
- + **Act like a tourist.** Take pictures, smile at people, eat a hot dog from the sidewalk cart, ask the locals to recommend things to see, buy a cheesy T-shirt.
- + **Let your cares melt away.** A massage can help you get into relaxation mode. Step out of the ordinary and try a treatment that's new to you, such as a hot stone massage or facial at a Massage Envy Spa.



Happy Summer Feet

It's summer and time to let your feet see the light of day in comfy—but flimsy—flip-flops. Soon enough, your feet will begin to protest this lack of support. The American Podiatric Medical Association offers these tips on keeping your feet pain-free:

- >> Do daily gentle calf stretches for 20 to 30 seconds on each leg. While barefoot, lean forward toward a wall with one foot forward and one foot back.
- >> Wear comfortable, supportive shoes when anticipating a long day of walking or standing, and replace shoes regularly.
- >> Avoid going barefoot on hard surfaces or when walking on uneven surfaces.
- >> Break in new shoes before walking long distances in them.

Reflexology is another great way to heal your heels. During your next massage, ask your therapist to pay special attention to your feet.

Q & Ahhh

Massage Envy experts answer your questions



Q: What is reflexology?

A: Reflexology is a type of bodywork where the therapist primarily works on the feet and/or hands. The theory behind reflexology is that there are "reflex points" on the feet and hands that relate to structures throughout the body, including muscles, bones, organs and glands. The premise of reflexology is that by stimulating those reflex points, through massage techniques, the benefits will be felt throughout the body.

Reflexology is a popular alternative therapy that promotes relaxation, improves circulation, reduces pain, soothes tired feet and encourages overall healing. Receiving reflexology on a regular basis can produce many benefits, such as decreasing stress and stress-related conditions; alleviating tension headaches; calming digestive disorders; relieving back and neck pain; promoting restful sleep; speeding recovery from injuries; and decreasing pain from menstrual disorders.

Receiving reflexology shouldn't be painful. If you feel discomfort, be sure to tell the therapist so he or she can reduce pressure and work within your comfort zone. Some areas on your feet and/or hands may be tender, and the reflexologist may spend extra time on these points. The soreness should decrease with pressure.

Reflexology is a great modality to receive by itself or incorporate into a full-body massage. Why not book an extra half-hour for your next massage so you can enjoy the added benefits of receiving this work?

—C.G. Funk, Licensed Massage Therapist and Vice President of Industry Relations and Product Development for Massage Envy

Do you have a question for our experts about massage therapy? Contact info@MassageEnvy.com. Type "Ask CG" in the subject line.

Good Health Garden

From helping arthritis to fighting cancer, some plants have healing qualities. Let's explore which two to add to your garden ... and your diet.

Rose Hips

Healing quality: Researchers believe that rose hips are highly anti-inflammatory and loaded with antioxidants, making them a natural remedy for the pain of rheumatoid arthritis.

Growing and eating: After roses bloom, simply avoid pruning the faded rose blossoms. In a few weeks, you'll see small, berry-sized, red seed balls

develop—these are the rose hips. Harvest them after the first frost and add to soups, breads, jams or tea.

Lamb's-Quarters

Healing quality: Though typically thought of as a weed, this plant is high in flavonoids and antioxidants, chemicals known to fight cancers in the body. It also contains essential vitamins and minerals, including calcium, beta-carotene, potassium and B vitamins.

Growing and eating: You can find this plant growing wild in most landscapes—just make sure you identify it correctly, and that the stems you pick are not treated with pesticides. Steam and eat, or add to salads.



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Leading the Good Life



What's Your Story?

Tell us how massage improves your life, and you could be featured in our next issue. Simply send an e-mail to memberstories@MassageEnvy.com with your full name, phone number and a brief description of how you benefit from being a Massage Envy member. We'll take it from there.

Massage Envy members Pat Detmer and Fred Canada have found their fountain of youth in massage

PAT DETMER AND FRED CANADA brim with enthusiasm for their marriage, business consulting firm and overall good fortune. It's been years since either has had a cold, and Pat is considered a "surgeon's dream," given her speedy recovery after the removal of her ovaries and thyroid gland.

"We eat right, work out three times a week and get massages every other week," explains Pat, looking much younger than 58. "It's all part of the same healthy package; each element helps the others," adds 69-year-old Fred, who also belies his age.

Regular massage has been an integral part of the zestful couple's immunity-boosting regimen for nearly a dozen years—ever since they sampled five-minute chair massages at a work event. After years of in-home service from a private therapist, the couple decided to try

their hometown Massage Envy clinic in Newcastle, Wash. Now, they rave about it.

"Aches and pains don't occur on a regular *bimonthly* basis," Pat quips. "If I wake up 'funny,' I don't have to wait for our standing appointment. Massage Envy gets me right in—sometimes within 10 minutes."

Fred appreciates having a variety of techniques at their disposal. "Before, we were limited to our therapist's particular method, her set of personal strengths," he explains. "Now we choose from many different styles. If I'm really sore, they'll match me with a deep tissue specialist; other days, I'll see someone else for a gentle rubdown."

The couple plan to maintain their Massage Envy routine while vacationing in Palm Springs, Calif. "There's a location close to where we stay, and they already have our credit card and other information on file," Fred notes. "It couldn't be easier."

—By Rebecca Douglas

Pat Detmer and Fred Canada (front) with their employees.





Just Add Massage

Though a daily massage sounds wonderful, a weekly or monthly massage is probably more realistic and still offers many health benefits, including:

- + Stress relief
- + Reduced heart rate
- + Lower blood pressure
- + Increased blood circulation
- + Reduced pain related to stress

Doesn't that sound important enough to add to your monthly to-do list? If so, schedule your next massage now by calling your local **Massage Envy** clinic. To find a clinic near you, visit **MassageEnvy.com**.



5 Daily To-Dos

To meet your 'healthy and happy' long-term goal, follow these steps

WITH SO MUCH TO DO, we tend to neglect our health on a daily basis. By adding these five tasks to the top of your daily to-do list, you'll be making your way to optimal health step by step.

1. Eat right, right away. Breakfast, the most important meal of the day will jump-start your metabolism, give you immediate energy and help you burn more calories. With all meals, think about food like a rainbow: the more color the better. The American Dietetic Association recommends sweet potatoes instead of white and deep-green romaine lettuce over iceberg for starters.

2. Get off the couch. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reports that 70 percent of American adults don't get enough physical activity to provide health benefits. Richard A. Stein, M.D., American Heart Association spokesman, recommends 30 to 40 minutes of vigorous exercise three to five days a week. "Exercise is one of the best things you can do to live longer and

better," he says, including reduced risk of heart attack and depression, increased late-day energy, improved sleep habits, lower weight and improved self-esteem.

3. Kick butts. Smoking causes 440,000 premature deaths each year, according to the HHS. Don't be one of them. "The benefits of stopping smoking are extraordinary. Simply put, you'll add years to your life," Stein says.

4. Laugh. Laughter lowers your blood pressure, increases blood flow to your heart and pumps more oxygen into the blood. A strong sense of humor may even help protect you against a heart attack, according to a study by cardiologists at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore.

5. Go to bed early. Adequate restful sleep, just like diet and exercise, is critical to good health. According to the National Institutes of Health, healthy adults need an average of eight hours each night. —By Jen Bondeson



Get Out and Get Fit

Ditch the gym and make the most of the season, with outdoor activities that may just bring out the best in you

UNLESS YOU'RE LUCKY ENOUGH to live in a perpetually balmy climate (or are one of the fearless few who will brave the elements no matter what), you undoubtedly had more than your share of indoor workouts in the past few months. But with summer in full swing, that's all behind us—it's time to break free of the confines of the gym and start working out in the great outdoors.

Explore the Area

Plenty of cities and towns have nearby parks and recreation areas that offer bike paths, walking/hiking paths or other opportunities for outdoor exercise. "Look at your environment and determine what kinds of activities you can do," says Walt Thompson, Ph.D., a spokesman for the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).

Some parks even have workout equipment for doing exercises like pull-ups and step-ups, says Pete McCall, an exercise physiologist and spokesman for the American Council on Exercise (ACE). If the park in your neighborhood isn't fully equipped, he suggests getting creative.

"As long as there aren't any kids on it, use the jungle gym to do various exercises like pull-ups," he explains. "Just climbing around on a jungle gym is good exercise."

Speaking of acting like a kid, don't overlook the resources at local schools, especially when they're not being used over the summer. "Run up and down the bleachers while humming the theme from *Rocky* in your head," McCall says.

Stay Home

If you have even a small yard, you can create your own outdoor gym. A medicine ball, some exercise bands and a jump rope are all you need to put you through the paces of a good, all-around workout (check out acefitness.org for exercise ideas). You can also bring your yoga mat outside and strike a pose—or practice your sun salutations.

And don't forget that yardwork can be good exercise, too. "My riding mower conked out last year," Thompson says. "I decided to use my push mower instead—and when I realized how much exercise I was getting I put off fixing my riding mower."

Go Beyond the Basics

Many warm-weather favorites—such as biking, swimming and tennis—provide a great workout. But you can also find ways to get more out of other kinds of summer fun. If you enjoy golfing, for example, skip the cart and walk briskly from hole to hole. If you're up for it, carry your own clubs. To get an even better upper-body workout on the links, be a bad golfer. "You'll have to swing your club that many more times," Thompson explains. Extra putting practice would do the trick, too.

A Year-Round Routine

No matter what time of year it is—or what physical activity you're engaging in—massage therapy is always an important component of your fitness routine.

According to Pete McCall, an exercise physiologist and spokesman for the American Council on Exercise (ACE), massage therapy helps muscles adapt to the physical stress exercise places on the musculoskeletal system. "Massage helps the muscle tissue recover from that stress," he explains.

Having frequent massages can keep muscles more limber, which

facilitates better stretching pre- and post-workout.

McCall especially recommends massage therapy the day after strenuous physical activity.

"I think everyone should get out and be active on a regular basis," he says. "And the more active you are, the more often you need a massage."



Or how about a nice sailboat ride? While it doesn't count if you're just lounging on the deck, actually participating in sailing the boat is vigorous exercise.

If walking is your thing, look for places along your route to stop and do some body-weight exercises, McCall suggests. "Use a ledge or bench for step-ups, or do some push-ups in the park," he says. It's just like circuit training, but you don't have to be stuck in the gym.

As you enjoy the best weather of the year, you're sure to find plenty of other opportunities for physical activity, from planting flowers to washing your car—it all adds up.

Most important, don't waste a moment of the season. "I urge everyone to take advantage of the good weather," Thompson says, "because the bad weather is going to be here before you know it."

—By Amy Lynn Smith



Easy Does It

Sure, the warmer weather makes you want to jump for joy, but don't overdo it. Even if you've been working out in a gym all winter, chances are you'll be doing different kinds of exercise outdoors. Always ease your way into any new activity. Otherwise, you'll be stuck sitting on the sidelines while the sun shines.



Fat Magic

Voilà! The secret behind a healthy heart and balanced nutrition is understanding the difference between “good” and “bad” fats

FAT. YOU WANT TO EAT LESS OF IT, maybe even eliminate it from your diet. But while it gets a bad rap, some types of fat are actually good for you. Fat can be categorized as saturated, unsaturated or trans. The more saturated a fat is, the more unhealthy it is. Dawn Jackson Blatner, R.D., a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, says there is a simple trick to remembering the fat facts—one you really have to see to believe. “The more saturated [bad] the fat is, the more solid it is at room temperature,” Jackson Blatner says. “That is a great, simple way to tell if the fat you are about to eat is healthy.”

The Good ... Healthy fats fall into two categories: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Monounsaturated fats include olive, canola and peanut oils. You’ll also find large concentrations in avocados and most nuts, which have been shown to lower the risk of coronary heart disease.

Two classes of polyunsaturated fats include omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. Omega-3s are found in such foods as salmon, walnuts and flaxseed. “Omega-3s are important for your heart,” Jackson Blatner says. “They are a source of energy and provide nutrients that help regulate your blood pressure, heart rate and nervous system.” According to research, healthy omega-6 fats—found in nonhydrogenated vegetable and seed oils (safflower and sunflower oils, for example) and whole grains—may help improve rheumatoid arthritis and skin disorders such as psoriasis and eczema.

... and the Bad Unhealthy fats include saturated animal fats, found in butter, whole-milk dairy products and red meat, and man-made fats in margarine and shortening. Trans fat is formed when liquid oils are turned into solid fats during manufacturing. The consumption of saturated fat and trans fat raises low-density lipoprotein (“bad” cholesterol) levels and increases the risk of coronary heart disease. Remember, all fats can be troublesome if you’re trying to lose weight because they pack 9 calories per gram. But just as with most “bad” foods, moderation is key. Incorporating a healthy amount of good fats in your diet can help keep your heart healthy. —By Jen Bondeson

Read the Label

The American Dietetic Association recommends that about 25 to 30 percent of your calories come from good fats. But even for a smart consumer, that can be a confusing concept. Dawn Jackson Blatner, R.D., warns not to be fooled by “no trans fat” labels, and to focus on the bigger picture. She recommends looking for the following on the label:

- 1. **LOW IN SATURATED FAT (LESS THAN 20 PERCENT DAILY VALUE)**
- 2. **NO TRANS FAT**
- 3. **HIGH IN POLYUNSATURATED OR MONO-UNSATURATED FATS**
- 4. **NO MORE THAN 20 PERCENT DAILY VALUE FOR ANY LISTING ON THE LABEL**

Ticker-Tempting Salmon

No food gets your heart ticking quite like salmon. It's low in saturated fat, yet rich in polyunsaturated fats such as omega-3. Eating fatty fish can help prevent memory loss as you age. This tasty salmon and sautéed tomato dish will have you thinking smart in no time.

Cooking/prep time: 30 minutes
Servings: 2 (4-oz. salmon; 1 ½ cups vegetables)

- Ingredients:**
- 2 (4-oz.) salmon fillets, cut about ¾-inch thick
 - 1 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
 - 4 tsp. minced chives, divided
 - 1 shallot, thinly sliced
 - 2 c. cherry tomatoes, halved
 - ¼ tsp. salt, divided
 - ¼ tsp. pepper, divided
 - 1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh basil
 - ½ small red and ½ small yellow bell pepper, roasted or grilled, cut into thin strips
 - 1 c. mixed baby greens
 - 2 lemon wedges, optional

- Directions:**
1. Brush each salmon fillet with ½ tsp. oil. Sprinkle each fillet with ½ tsp. chives. Set aside 30 minutes. Wipe off chives.
 2. Meanwhile, heat 1 tsp. oil in large nonstick skillet. Add shallot and tomatoes. Sprinkle on ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper. Cook over medium-high heat for 2 to 3 minutes or until tomatoes are pulpy. Stir in basil. Spoon tomato mixture onto deep serving plate. Set aside.
 3. For grilling, brush grill lightly with ½ tsp. oil; preheat grill. Brush salmon lightly with remaining ½ tsp. oil and season with remaining ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper. Grill salmon

starting skin-side down over medium-high heat, 4 to 5 minutes per side or until cooked through. For indoor cooking, wipe out nonstick skillet. Heat remaining 1 tsp. oil over medium-high heat. Season salmon with remaining ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper. Add salmon to skillet, skin-side down. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes per side or until cooked through to center. Remove from skillet. 4. To assemble, arrange salmon over tomatoes. Sprinkle remaining chives over salmon and tomatoes. Place pepper strips over salmon. Place baby greens on plate. Garnish with lemon wedges.



Nutritional information per serving:
285 calories, 13.5 grams total fat, 33 grams protein, 13 grams carbohydrates, 44 milligrams cholesterol, 350 milligrams sodium and 3.5 grams dietary fiber

Head to Toe

8 full-body benefits for getting your regular massages—besides feeling great

BY SHELLEY FLANNERY
PHOTOS BY JEFF NEWTON

1 Fighting Fibromyalgia Symptoms

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition characterized by muscle pain, fatigue and tenderness, according to the American College of Rheumatology. Symptoms can be brought on or exacerbated by stress and lack of sleep. Massage has been found to help relieve stress as well as alleviate muscle pain, discomfort and spasms in patients suffering from fibromyalgia. In fact, it's one of the most effective complementary treatments, according to the National Fibromyalgia Association, which reports that about 40 percent of sufferers have used it as part of their treatment plan.

2 Easing Surgical Effects

Postsurgical rehabilitation is one of the most important aspects of undergoing any procedure. And massage can help get you back on your feet by increasing circulation, relaxing muscles, and improving joint movement and flexibility. It's even been found to promote tissue regeneration and reduce postsurgical adhesions and swelling, according to the Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals.



Get to the Point

Massage Envy therapists are trained in a variety of techniques and modalities, including trigger point, deep tissue, reflexology and cranial sacral therapy. Talk to your therapist about the medical conditions that affect you to find out if massage can help. To find a clinic near you, visit MassageEnvy.com.

YOU LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR REGULAR MASSAGE. Maybe it relaxes you. Maybe it energizes you. Maybe it helps relieve the tension in your back. Whatever it is, you know you like it. But massage has more benefits than you probably realize.

“Regular massage keeps the body working at optimal levels,” says C.G. Funk, VP of industry relations and product development for Massage Envy. “It keeps people well—physically and emotionally.”

Here are eight interesting ways massage can benefit your body.

3 Improving Mood

It's no secret that massage can relax you and make you feel good mentally. But did you know that it may even help treat anxiety and depression? According to a review by the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine, massage is able to lower the body's level of cortisol, a stress hormone, by as much as 53 percent. Massage also appears to increase the feel-good hormones serotonin and dopamine.

4 Headache Relief

Approximately 28 million Americans suffer from migraine headaches, according to the National Headache Foundation. Often, migraines are triggered or exacerbated by stress and poor sleep. In a study published in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, researchers found that participants who received massages had better quality sleep and fewer migraines than participants who didn't. Effects even lasted up to three weeks after therapy ended.

5 Lowering Blood Pressure

About 72 million Americans have high blood pressure, which can lead to stroke and heart attack.

A study in the journal *Biological Research for Nursing* found that people who had at least three 10-minute back massages a week lowered their blood pressure more than people who spent the same amount of time just relaxing.

6 Increasing Flexibility

Whether you're an avid athlete who is constantly putting stress on your knees or a middle-aged adult who has lost some range of motion in your hips, staying flexible is key. Massage can help you maintain flexibility and range of motion by working the muscles, connective tissue, tendons and ligaments, and by stimulating the production and retention of the natural lubricants between the connective tissue fibers.

7 Breaking Back Pain

While back pain is one of the most common reasons people seek massage, many are not aware of just how helpful a treatment it is. In fact, a study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that massage therapy was more effective at relieving back pain than other therapies such as acupuncture and spinal modification. It even appeared to reduce the use of painkillers by 36 percent.

8 Curbing Carpal Tunnel

Carpal tunnel is a painful condition in which the median nerve that connects the forearm and hand becomes pinched at the wrist, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Symptoms include burning, tingling or numbness in the palm, thumb and middle fingers. It can also lead to difficulty forming a fist or gripping small objects. Treatments usually consist of medication, wrist braces and surgery. But a study in the *Journal of Bodywork and Movement* reported that carpal tunnel patients receiving regular massage had less pain, reduced symptoms and improved grip strength. 🍀



Turn that Frown Upside Down

Teach yourself to be happier, even when times are tough

BY JUNE D. BELL

If the gloomy economic climate is dragging your morale lower than the Dow Jones Industrial Average, you have plenty of company. We've been barraged for months with depressing news about defrauded investors, mortgage foreclosures, bankruptcies, employee layoffs and companies that have gone belly-up.

Chances are that you know someone who has lost his or her job or home or is pinching pennies to get by. That someone might even be you.

Feeling more optimistic when the economy is so bleak may seem like a lost cause. But surprisingly, researchers have found that adopting a more upbeat attitude is a skill that, like playing guitar or skiing, can be learned through practice.

Caroline Adams Miller, who holds a master's degree in applied positive psychology, says she's

confident that people can teach themselves to get more pleasure from life, regardless of their circumstances. "This is all about rolling up your sleeves in the service of happiness," she says.

An Attitude of Gratitude

One of the easiest and most effective paths to a happier life is to develop an attitude of gratitude. It's no coincidence that giving thanks is a foundation of prayer in every religion and culture. Expressing appreciation requires you to take stock of the blessings in your life, which in turn reminds you to acknowledge that so much good regularly comes your way.

If you're stuck on what exactly to be grateful for, take a few seconds before you get out of bed each morning to value the potential in each new



day, suggests Gloria J. Burgess, a Seattle-based leadership development expert. Tell yourself, "I'm grateful to be here," and you'll find that thought will improve how you treat yourself *and* others.

Another way to help yourself be more upbeat even in trying times is to schedule pleasurable activities. Those anticipated events don't have to be costly or exotic, but they do need to be a welcome break in your routine. They can be as simple as lunch with a girlfriend at your favorite bistro or a stroll through the farmers market for fresh strawberries. "If I want to have a good day," Miller says, "I'll put a massage on my calendar for a week out."

Schedulers reap a twofold benefit, she notes. They get a rush of happiness anticipating the enjoyable event, and they then savor the activity as it happens.

Low-Budget Ways to Keep Your Spirits High

Find the good stuff: Visit positivepause.com for a gentle pep talk. Sign up for free upbeat dispatches from happynews.com and greatday.com's "The Daily Motivator."

Send a thank-you note: Write a few lines of appreciation to someone who doesn't expect it. How about your neighbor or your child's bus driver? Teachers (former and current) and friends are also great choices.

Buy yourself flowers: An inexpensive bouquet will perk up your kitchen table or cubicle. For an added boost, leave a bunch on a colleague's desk or give a few stems to a stranger.

Start a blog: Posting your thoughts to an online journal carries all the documented therapeutic benefits of journaling with the added plus of feedback from readers.

Jingle your charm bracelet: Forget about wearing your heart on your sleeve. You'll get a lift when you see little reminders of special vacations, personal milestones and favorite people on your wrist.

Help Yourself by Helping Others

While nurturing your own mind and body is one surefire method of staying upbeat, it's only a piece in the bigger picture of happiness. Reaching out to others is a powerful mood-lifter, especially when you're connecting with those who benefit from your efforts. "Doing good for someone raises the giver's spirit," Burgess says. "There's always someone out there who needs what you have."

Consider volunteering at a pet shelter, library, local school or soup kitchen. Or ask at your community center if you can aid homebound senior citizens by driving them on errands. Fostering personal connections turns out to be a powerful antidote to the self-absorption that can obsess us during trying times.

There's another benefit to community service, says Miller, who lives in Bethesda, Md. The good feelings that blossom in you as you reach out actually rub off on others. Known as "social contagion theory," this principle says that moods, like colds, are easily transmitted between family members, colleagues and friends.

"The people closest to you are predictors of who you'll become," Miller says.

So it's no wonder that a diet of depressing news or too much time with trash-talking friends can make us feel defeated as well. But the flip side is, thankfully, true too: Even when times are tough, we can create a more upbeat reality for ourselves, and that optimism is equally infectious. ♣

*Stress Less,
Smile More
Money worries can
leave you feeling
drained. With
regular massage
therapy at Massage
Envy you're making
an inexpensive but
important investment
in your mental and
physical health. Call
your local Massage
Envy today to
schedule your next
appointment.*



A Dose of Closeness

Connecting with friends is good medicine

Whistle While You Work
 Feel like you're just too busy to see your friends? Why not get together to play while you work? Schedule a Saturday to take turns doing a cleaning or laundry blitz in each other's homes or get together to cook a week's worth of meals to split and breeze. Then, as a reward for your hard work, plan a girl's night out group massage at Massage Envy. You'll need it!

FINDING OUT THAT FRIENDSHIPS are good for your health is like learning that chocolate is the foundation of healthy eating. How hard can it be to make something so enjoyable a priority?

As much as you may want to put time with friends high on your list of things to do, many other responsibilities vie for your time: Work. Laundry. Family. Laundry. Kids' activities. (And there's always laundry.)

But who's too busy to do something that keeps you happier, healthier and more resilient to stress?

Connect with the Benefits

"Human beings have a very strong need to belong," says Georgianna Donadio, Ph.D., program director of the National Institute of Whole Health.

"Strong social networks give you a sense of purpose and belonging that has a profound effect on your well-being."

Many research studies have linked being socially integrated—participating in a broad range of social

relationships—with better physical and mental health. Socially integrated people:

- >> Live longer
- >> Are more likely to survive heart attacks
- >> Have less risk of cancer recurrence
- >> Have less upper respiratory illness
- >> Have less depression and anxiety, and less severe cognitive decline as they age

Stay Immune to Stress

Feeling connected to a social support network nurtures a healthy immune system. First-year college students who felt lonely or were socially isolated were less protected by the flu vaccine than other students, according to a 2005 study in the journal *Health Psychology*.

Chronically lonely people actually experience changes in genes involved with immunity, according to a 2007 study in the journal *Genome Biology*. This helps explain to researchers why feeling isolated is linked with a higher risk of heart disease, viral infections and cancer.

"Any time you reduce stress, you have less disease," Donadio says. "Feeling that you have friends who care about you and people whose lives you contribute to is a real stress-killer."

Find Friend Time

Sure, it can be tough for busy women to stay connected to their friends. But what are you missing when you don't do it?

"I challenge people to ask themselves, 'What price am I paying when I feel disconnected from my support system?'" says Corrie Woods, women's self-care coach and author of *The Woman's Field Guide to Exceptional Living*.

Say no to say yes. "Learn how to say no to things in your current schedule so you can make time for friends," Woods says. Decide what supports your overall well-being and make those things a priority.

Get goal oriented. Look for ways to achieve personal goals while building relationships. Want to

Facebook or Face Time?

Social networking websites aren't just for teens and 20-somethings. It's true the majority of American users on Facebook are under 30, but the fastest-growing group of new users is over 30.

Can you really get an online friend fix? Does online social networking add to or detract from nurturing your network of friends?

"I really think it's complementary," says Irene S. Levine, Ph.D., professor of psychiatry at New York University School of Medicine and author of *Best Friends Forever: Surviving the Myth* (Overlook Press, fall 2009). "You can enhance your friendships by having this other dimension."

Connecting with friends online allows you to keep up with the chronology of each other's lives. "But you can't share as intimately," Levine says. Ideally, staying in virtual touch makes it easier to reach out and connect in person.



get fit or develop your creative side? Set up a regular walking date with a friend, or get a group together to sign up for drawing lessons.

Reach out for new connections. To meet new friends, take a class, join a club or volunteer for a cause you believe in. "These are great ways to meet like-minded people," Woods says.

Relax together. Schedule a girls' night out at Massage Envy to get massages at the same time. Extend the relaxation by going out for tea or coffee afterward.

Choose to celebrate. Finally unpack that last box from your move? Did your friend get a promotion? Is today your favorite author's birthday? "Take note and observe the things that might slide by unnoticed," Woods says. Any excuse to create a special occasion gives you a reason to have fun with your friends. —By Teresa Caldwell Board

A MOTHER'S
JOB IS 24/7.



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Mom's workday really never ends. This Mother's Day, give her the gift she deserves—a gift card from Massage Envy. Our professional massage therapists are here weeknights and weekends so Mom can enjoy her massage when it's most convenient for her. And chances are, one of our neighborhood locations is right around the corner. Take care of Mom all year long with a gift membership— comfort her like she's always comforted you, with the gift of relaxation from Massage Envy.

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