

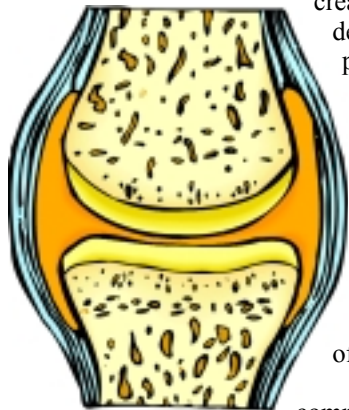


Joint Health

Last month we focused on reversing the asthma epidemic. The cover story for a recent issue of *Time* magazine (December 9) warns us about “The Coming Epidemic of Arthritis.” We could easily point to several other medical conditions that have been described as modern plagues. Even allowing for a certain degree of media hype, there seems to be some fundamental error in our collective approach to health. The good news is that although the causes of most illnesses are complex, the modern deluge of chronic disease is probably linked to lifestyle factors that we can influence. Joint disease is a case in point.

Joint Disease Basics

According to a report recently published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one-third of all American’s suffer from some form of joint disease. As the baby-boom generation continues to mature into mid-life, these numbers will likely increase – hence the “coming epidemic” forecasted in the *Time* report.



Researchers attribute much of the increase in joint disease to the fitness movement that extols jogging, high-impact aerobics, and fast-breaking sports (i.e., football, basketball, soccer, and tennis). For those who don’t exercise enough, obesity can be a significant contributing cause of joint problems.

Osteoarthritis is one of the most common forms of joint disease, typically manifesting as mild joint pain in the fourth or fifth decade of life. Osteoarthritis involves deterioration of cartilage that serves as a shock-absorbing cushion between bones. As cartilage dete-

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Exercise Your Options



Exercise is big business. There are a multitude of companies that want to sell you the latest exercise garb, workout gadget, club membership, or video. Yet, we don’t have to spend a lot of money to take regular walks or do stretches in the morning or evening. Even aerobic exercise can be a simple, inexpensive pursuit. To a large extent, the choice of what kind

of exercise goes back to the motivation issue that we discussed last month. What does it take to move you. Here are some thoughts to consider when exercising your workout options.

Three Types of Exercise

Different types of exercise meet different needs. Basically, exercise can be classified as follows:

Aerobic (cardiovascular) exercise improves circulation and the absorption of oxygen. Running, rowing, and cycling are examples of aerobic exercise. This is type of movement that is most often suggested for losing weight and preventing heart disease.

Anaerobic exercise builds strength by working against resistance (e.g., weight lifting). This kind of exercise can be helpful for strengthening a weak area where you are experiencing chronic pain (i.e., back pain). Many people use it to achieve a more muscular figure.

Stretching exercise (such as yoga) develops flexibility and protects muscles from injury. Edgar Cayce tended to recommend stretching exercises for specific therapeutic purposes. Traditional osteopathic manipulations typically recommended by Cayce often involved stretching.

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I have seen several news reports lately about a new test for inflammation in blood vessels that is supposed to be better than cholesterol levels for predicting heart disease. Do you think the test has merit and did Edgar Cayce have anything to say about inflammation in blood vessels? L. J. e-mail

You are probably referring to a test for C-reactive protein (CRP) which is a substance produced in our liver as part of a response to inflammation anywhere in the body. For years researchers have speculated that inflammation may play a major role in the development of cardiovascular illness. The CRP test works by measuring how much underlying atherosclerosis a patient has and thus predicts the risk of future heart attack and stroke events.

A CRP test approved by the FDA last November is inexpensive (usually about \$20) and can be used in conjunction with other assessments of cardiovascular status. Researchers caution that standard laboratory tests for CRP are not sufficient to determine cardiac risk. If you decide to have the CRP and find that this protein is elevated, you may want to consider the standard preventive measures for heart disease such as stopping smoking, increasing exercise, losing weight, and eating a heart-healthy diet. As a medical intervention, some researchers believe that taking antibiotics to inhibit inflammation can reduce the risk of heart disease in patients with elevated CRP. Other experts suggest that taking aspirin may be helpful because of its anti-blood-clotting and anti-inflammatory properties. Clearly, more research is needed to explore medical treatments for patients with high CRP.

I have not found any specific Cayce readings that directly relate to the type of blood vessel inflammation that is measured by the CRP test, but I like the concept and believe that it is consistent with the Cayce philosophy. The lifestyle options cited above make the most sense to me as preventive measures for individuals at risk for heart disease who also have elevated CRP. D.M.

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riorates, the body's immune system is activated to remove worn tissue and toxic enzymes that accumulate resulting in inflammation and painful swelling. Unfortunately, healthy tissue can also be damaged by the ardent immune response.

Less frequent but usually more severe, rheumatoid arthritis is considered an autoimmune disease, meaning that the body's defense system attacks the thin layer of cells (synovium) that lubricate the joints. Afflicting about 2.5 million Americans, this form of arthritis usually becomes evident between the third and fifth decade, but can occur at any age. Whereas the immune response in osteoarthritis typically occurs only at the damaged joint, the autoimmune activity of rheumatoid arthritis is systemic and is thought to be the source of inflammation and swelling. Heredity plays a role in the development of rheumatoid arthritis, but not everyone with the condition has the identified genetic markers. Environmental factors such as viruses or bacteria may be involved in some cases.

Treatment Options

Medications head the list of standard medical treatments for all forms of arthritis. Generally speaking, arthritis drugs fall into the following categories:

Over-the-counter painkillers (such as aspirin and ibuprofen) reduce swelling and joint damage but can be hard on the digestive system.

Antibiotics (such as tetracyclamine) kill germs and slow cartilage erosion.

Lubricants (such as hyaluronic acid) facilitate movement and ease pain.

Corticosteroids reduce inflammation and relieve pain but can lead to increased damage by masking symptoms and encouraging damaging activity.

Various surgical procedures are also available as treatment options for arthritis:

Arthroscopy removes dying cartilage and smooths over joint connections.

Bone fusion permanently fixates joints with pins or plates.

Tissue repair reattaches muscles, ligaments, and tendons.

Joint replacement is used for joints that are beyond repair.

Exercise is the most natural of mainstream therapies for arthritis. Aquatics, recumbent (reclining) bicycling, walking, and low-impact aerobics are the most common exercise modalities for joint disease.

Alternative medicine approaches include acupuncture and nutritional supplements (most notably glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate).

If you are concerned about developing arthritis, here are some simple preventive measures recommended by physicians:

Movement – Regular gentle flexing of joints lubricates and protects joint surfaces. Avoid exercise that pounds joints.

Weight – Avoid obesity that puts extra stress on joints, especially the knees, hips, and ankles.

Muscles – Maintain optimal muscle tone with good nutrition and regular exercise. This will take some of the stress off of joints.

Cayce on Joint Health

Edgar Cayce gave many readings for persons suffering from various forms of joint disease including arthritis. As with virtually all of the Cayce health readings, the readings addressed each person as an individual. Yet some very definite patterns of causation and treatment can be noted in this group of readings.

The holistic foundation of the Cayce approach calls for spiritual and mental attunement to the divine within. Working with the ideals exercise to develop an ideal attitude for healing is an excellent place to begin this essential phase of healing. See the companion article in this issue for more information on developing an optimistic attitude.

At a physical level, the readings on joint disease typically describe systemic problems such as poor eliminations and improper acid/alkaline balance tending toward hyperacidity. Therefore, internal cleansing and attention to the diet are two prime therapeutic measures recommended by Cayce for joint disease. Typical cleansing modalities include drinking plenty of pure water, castor oil packs, and colonic irrigations. Cayce's diet recommendations also tend to assist with internal cleansing while maintaining optimal acid/alkaline balance and proper nutrition.

Therapy to enhance the body's structural components through osteopathy or chiropractic is frequently recommended in the readings on joint disease. Massage is important to improve circulation, nervous

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Optimism = Health & Longevity

The Power of Positive Attitudes and Behaviors

Modern health research continues to affirm Edgar Cayce's observation that mind is the builder – that attitudes and emotions strongly influence health and longevity. The clear message is that combining positive mental attitude with healthy behaviors increases our chances for a long and happy life.

As evidence of this trend in scientific research, a recent study focused on 660 people over the age of 50 living in Oxford, Ohio.

In the first stage of the project, individuals were questioned about various attitudes, including views about aging. Two decades later the researchers checked to see which of the individuals were still alive. The results were remarkable. Those who had earlier indicated positive attitudes toward aging, lived about 7.5 years longer, on average, than those with a pessimistic outlook.

The researchers pointed out that the effect associated with positive mental attitude was stronger than common health practices such as lowering blood pressure and reducing cholesterol, each of which tended to extend life about four years.

The authors of this study that appeared in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* noted, "Our study carries two messages. The discouraging one is that negative self-perceptions can diminish life expectancy; the encouraging one is that positive self-perceptions can prolong life expectancy."

Optimism vs. Pessimism

A study published two years ago in the journal *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* also gives credence to the idea that positive attitudes lead to greater health and longevity. The study compared responses to psychological questionnaires administered to 800 individuals in the 1960s to current health status.

In analyzing the data, special attention was given to attitudes of optimism



and pessimism. The bottom line was clear – optimists report a higher level of physical and mental functioning than their pessimist counterparts.

Toshihiko Maruta, a Mayo Clinic psychiatrist and coauthor of the study, observes, "What is happening in the mind is strongly influencing the body, or the final outcome of the body, which is death." Maruta insists that wellness of being is not just physical, but attitudinal. "How you perceive what goes on around you and how you interpret it may have an impact on your longevity, and it could affect the quality of your later years."

Attitudes and Behaviors

One of the major problems with research that relies on questionnaires and correlational analysis is the issue of causation. Just because a specific attitude correlates with positive health status does not necessarily mean that the wellness resulted directly from the mental outlook. Perhaps people with constructive attitudes are healthier because they practice healthy behaviors, or for some other unknown reason.

For example, research indicates that elderly people with pessimistic attitudes tend to decline medical care more often than elderly persons with optimistic attitudes. Health and longevity may be linked to a combination of interacting factors at various levels.

This pattern of interactive factors is the model that I have noticed over and over in the Cayce material. In essence, it involves the integration of spiritual, mental, and physical factors to produce optimal health and longevity.

In a case involving a sixty-three-year-old woman suffering from toxemia and general debilitation, Edgar Cayce's treatment plan included both positive attitude and physiotherapy: "But if there is kept that attitude of expectancy as related to beneficial helps as may be had by the correct changes being wrought [optimism], and the general health and those conditions related to same built

up, better eliminations established [physical treatments], we find there might be much better conditions and many years of useful activity." (2912-1)

In numerous similar readings, Cayce insisted that the first step in healing is to get the spiritual ideal and mental attitude correct. The obvious challenge is how to recognize and change a pessimistic attitude.

How to Change

So what can we do if we come to realize that we fall into the pessimistic mode that researchers have linked to poor health? How can we overcome the dangerous tendency of pessimistic thinking?

The Cayce readings consistently linked pessimism and negative attitudes with self-centeredness. To develop an optimistic outlook, we need to get beyond ourselves, not only in our attitudes, but also in our behaviors.

Here is how Cayce put it to a woman experiencing physical and emotional distress associated with pessimism: "...we may bring back to the body quite a different outlook, upon life. And we will arouse those emotions not only to be good but to be good for something; and this the body has almost lost sight of. Being merely good for self's own satisfaction doesn't satisfy a very great deal in the last analysis of the purposes of an individual experience in associations with others. But to become a channel through which hopefulness, helpfulness, patience, long-suffering, endurance, loveliness in its expressions to others, makes for life and its experience and its expressions and its outlook upon life more and more worth while... For if you continue to look for ill health or sordidness or disappointments or darkness, how has the law been given? 'As ye seek, so ye find – as ye sow, so ye reap.' If you are looking for these, ye cannot find happiness or contentment or harmony or peace, either in body or mind; neither can ye give out other than discontent to others in thine own ... self-expression." (1303-1)

This marvelous reading contains much more practical advice on how to improve dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors.

Half Full or Half Empty?

Do a little self-analysis. If you find within yourself a tendency for seeing the cup of life as half empty rather than half full, adjust your attitude. Remember what the latest scientific research has demonstrated about the power of mental outlook.

Don't forget to integrate your positive attitudes with positive behaviors. Be not only good, but good for something.

Keep optimistic and enjoy a long, healthy life!



Health News



Nuts Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

Eating lots of nuts and peanut butter may lower the risk of type 2 diabetes. Researchers at Harvard University's School of Public Health reported the findings in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Nov. 27, 2002). The study focused on 83,818 women nurses but the researchers believe the results are valid for men as well. Participants who reported eating the equivalent of a handful of nuts or one tablespoon of peanut butter at least five times per week were more than 20 percent less likely to develop type 2 (adult-onset) diabetes than those who rarely or never consumed those foods. Nuts are high in unsaturated (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated) fat and other nutrients that may improve glucose and insulin homeostasis. To avoid increasing caloric intake, the researchers recommended regular nut consumption as a replacement for refined grain products and red or processed meats. Some brands of peanut butter contain sugar and fatty preservatives, so be sure to check the label. Organic nuts and nut butter from your local health food store are probably your best bet.

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system coordination, and eliminations. Peanut oil was specifically endorsed as a preventive and therapeutic massage oil for arthritis.

Specific medications that work with the glands (Atomidine and gold chloride) were prescribed in certain cases, usually of a more severe nature. Note: These medicines are toxic and should be administered under the direction of a physician.

Thus, the Cayce solution to "the coming epidemic of arthritis" is holistic and practical. Most of Cayce's suggestions fall under the heading of lifestyle choices.

The great news for those wishing to pursue the Cayce approach to joint health is that abundant resources are available. *Heal Arthritis*, a book by William A. McGarey, M.D., can be purchased from A.R.E. Press (800-723-1112). Treatment protocols for osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis are also available from the A.R.E. (757-496-6411).

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For most of us, aerobic and stretching exercises are most helpful for health maintenance. Of course, it is a good idea to talk with your physician before beginning any serious exercise regimen, especially if you have been diagnosed with an illness.

Cayce on Exercise

"Exercise is wonderful, and necessary and little or few take as much as is needed, in a systematic manner. Use common sense, use discretion." (283-1) That really sums up Edgar Cayce's view of exercise.

In terms of physiology, Cayce took into account the circadian (twenty-four

hour) rhythm of the body's functioning when recommending exercise. For example, he noted that the body tends to change its pattern of circulation (deep/superficial and upper/lower hepatic) during the day/night cycle. With this in mind, he typically suggested vertical exercises for the morning and horizontal exercises at bedtime to assist with the changeover of circulation patterns. Optimal exercise works with the body's own natural physiology rather than against it. This is a fundamental principle of the Cayce approach for any healing modality.

In studying the Cayce health readings I have also noticed that Cayce tended to view exercise in much the same way as osteopathic treatment. His referrals for osteopathic manipulations typically were for either *specific* or *general treatment*. *Specific treatment* addresses a specific anatomical problem by correcting that problem area (usually along the spine). *General osteopathic treatment* served more as a tonic for the whole system – coordinating all the systems of the body and improving drainage (eliminations).

Actually, when you go back and study the old osteopathic text, you realize that the *general treatment* is usually presented as a series of *specific treatments* that mobilize each of the major areas of the body. In other words, the various joints are put through their normal range of motion, much as in a general exercise workout. Regardless of whether the osteopathic treatment was *general* or *specific*, it tended to be more of a gentle stretching of muscles and ligaments rather than high velocity popping and cracking.

The *general* and *specific* treatment concept carries over to Cayce's recommendations for exercise. *General exercise*

(such as walking, swimming, or playing tennis) was recommended to help the whole system to function optimally. *Specific exercise* recommendations focused on a particular anatomical or physiological problem in the body, and often involved stretching and loosening similar to traditional osteopathic manipulation.

The practical outcome of this line of reasoning is that stretching exercises may serve some of the same purpose as the osteopathic treatment that Edgar Cayce so often recommended (and which is often so difficult to obtain today). Keeping a balance of general and specific exercise can help maintain coordination in the system while allowing for improvement of weak or problematic areas.

Physiotherapist Harold Reilly integrated Cayce's specific exercises into his exercise regimen and developed a general exercise program consisting of a series of specific moves, similar to a traditional general osteopathic treatment. Reilly also recommended specific exercises for specific conditions. Fascinating parallel, isn't it?

A modern variation of the general/specific exercise concept is the "Daily Dozen." These movements tend to work out each area of the body as a general tonic, yet specific movements may be utilized for specific conditions.

For those who are able to visit Virginia Beach, be sure to ask about the morning exercise program offered by Peter Van Daam at the conference center. Peter's enthusiasm and expertise will help motivate you to get moving.

Application

We still must come back to the fundamental issues of application – the best exercises for you are the ones that you do. What is your choice. What is it that moves you? A general exercise program including aerobic and stretching exercises will probably be best for most people. Some of you may have need of specific therapeutic exercises for medical conditions. Your osteopath, chiropractor, or physical therapist is probably the best source of information on specific therapeutic exercises for your unique situation. Also, as you have heard so many times, be sure to talk with your physician before beginning any strenuous exercise regimen to make sure that you don't overdo it and put yourself in a dangerous situation.

Visit the **True Health** Web site:
www.edgarcayce.org/th
 for more information on arthritis,
 exercise, and optimism.