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LIVING

The Wellness Issue



20 Ways to Wellness in 2020

Reduce stress,
relieve pain,
boost immunity,
and improve
mental and physical
fitness with self-care
opportunities
in the 805.

BY HEIDI DVORAK

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Find strength in numbers by joining a group weight-loss program like the one at The Ranch Malibu.



particularly at colleges and adult schools, or check out the **Knauer Music School** (knauermusicschool.com) in Agoura Hills and **Guitar Center** (guitarcenter.com) locations in Westlake Village and Oxnard.

17 Create Art to Work Through Trauma

A research review published in the *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* found a small body of quantifiable data to support the effectiveness of art therapy in treating a variety of symptoms and disorders in various age groups. At **Create Your Life Studio** (createyourlifestudio.com) in Santa Barbara, licensed art therapist, marriage and family therapist, and somatic therapist Christine Scott-Hudson helps unlock the emotions that clients repress while dealing with issues such as anxiety, illness, divorce, sexual trauma, abuse, disability, death, and PTSD. Hudson says she combines psychotherapeutic techniques with the process of creating a drawing, painting, or collage to access subconscious material, which often surfaces in visual form.

18 Diet With Others

If you take part in a community-based weight loss program, you may drop more pounds than trying to do it solo, according to a Baylor College of Medicine study published in *The American Journal of Medicine*. That speaks volumes for groups like Weight Watchers, but if you're looking for a "community" that's highly motivated and willing to invest time and money in a high-end no-options boot camp-style program, try **The Ranch Malibu** (theranchmalibu.com), a seven-day program limited to 18 guests, all on the same path to wellness. Offered by The Ranch health and fitness company, this particular program convenes in the Santa Monica Mountains. The setting is spectacular and the private cottages are more than comfy, but the program is no-nonsense: eight hours of daily exercise that includes a four-hour group hike and a variety of fitness classes, complemented by a plant-based meal plan of 1,400 calories a day.

COURTESY OF THE RANCH MALIBU

19 Bathe in Nature

There's no tub involved when it comes to immersing yourself in a practice called Forest Bathing, but it can be cleansing in its own way. **The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden** (sbbg.org) offers a unique walk in the woods, conducted by a certified forest therapy guide who extends what is called verbal invitations to participants to experience the natural world through breathing exercises, reflections, observations, and sharing.

Inspired by the Japanese practice *shinrin-yoku* (nature bathing) this two-hour stroll is not intended to increase participants' heart rates or sharpen their plant-identifying skills. Rather, the intention is to help them slow down and envelope themselves in natural surroundings in a relaxing, sensory way.

A study from the Center for Environment, Health and Field Sciences, at Chiba University, Kashiwa, in Japan, supports the theory. It showed that forest environments promote lower concentrations of cortisol, lower pulse rate, lower blood pressure, greater parasympathetic nerve activity, and lower sympathetic nerve activity than city environments. So take a walk in the botanical garden on February 22, March 14, or April 25.

20 Take Your Best Shot

Controversy abounds regarding immunizations, but it's tough to argue with the World Health Organization, which claims that getting vaccinated is one of the world's most cost-effective health interventions, preventing 2 to 3 million deaths each year. To further put your mind at ease, Ramesh Nathan, M.D., an infectious disease specialist at **Los Robles Regional Medical Center** (losrobleshospital.com) in Thousand Oaks says, "Vaccines are continuously monitored for safety, and there is no evidence that [vaccination] leads to learning disabilities or long-term health issues."

Nathan goes on to explain that when a large population is vaccinated, it limits the spread of disease since unimmunized individuals benefit from those who are immunized because those vaccinated make it more difficult for an illness to be transmitted—a concept called herd immunity. Says Nathan, "Vaccination is an investment in the health of our future generations." ♦

This article is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment. Please consult your physician or other qualified health provider for recommendations regarding personal health conditions and practices.