

SMARTER BETTER FITTER STRONGER

Edited by
Lauren Bonney

Expert advice to kick off 2018 right—plus,
your insider guide to the area's top health and
wellness experiences.



COURTESY OF 1440 MULTIVERSITY

HEAL IT

FROM IMPROVING SLEEP TO LAUGHING OFF STRESS, THE LATEST HOLISTIC HEALING TECHNIQUES ARE TAKING THE HEALTH FIELD BY STORM.

By Sara Hare

MATTHEW WALKER

SLEEP EXPERT

Matthew Walker is on a mission. The self-described “sleep diplomat” is trying to solve what he believes to be one of the greatest public health challenges of the 21st century.

“We’re in the midst of a sleep-loss epidemic,” says Walker. “Virtually every major disease is linked to sleep loss.”

In his new book, *Why We Sleep*, a *New York Times* best-seller, Walker presents scientific studies from UC San Francisco, Stanford University, and Harvard University concluding that nearly every illness—from cancer to cardiovascular disease—is related to not getting enough shut-eye.

A good-natured, sandy-haired neuroscientist from Liverpool, England, the 43-year-old came upon the science of sleep by accident. Walker was measuring the brain activity of dementia patients, looking for early warning signs of the devastating disease, when he discovered that brain function was best recorded at night—when electrostatic activity was at its greatest. Dementia patients had a remarkably high

incidence of sleep disruption compared with healthier segments of the population. This was Walker’s moment of discovery.

Since then, there has been an explosion of new research about the “hard science of sleep.”

“We now realize sleep has far deeper implications on health than we previously thought,” says Walker. “We cannot find a single psychiatric disease that does not entail sleep deprivation. Blood sugar levels are profoundly affected after just one week of sleep loss. Seventy percent of the body’s immunity is lost after just one night of sleeping poorly. And there is such a compelling link between sleep and cancer that the World Health Organization has now classified shift work as a possible carcinogen. A lack of sleep is also deadly for your weight.”

According to Walker, people need seven to eight hours of sleep per night. “It seems obvious that sleep is hugely important to the human mind,” he says. “Shorter sleep times predict a shorter life. There’s no doubt about this fact.”



“IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT SLEEP IS HUGEY IMPORTANT TO THE HUMAN MIND.”

—MATTHEW WALKER

WALKER’S FIVE TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT’S SLEEP:

1. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on the weekend.
2. Keep your bedroom temperature cool; about 65 degrees Fahrenheit is optimal for cooling your body for productive sleep.
3. An hour before bedtime, dim the lights and turn off all screens.
4. If you can’t sleep, get out of bed and do something relaxing until the urge to sleep returns.
5. Avoid caffeine after 1 p.m., and don’t go to bed tipsy. Alcohol is a sedative and blocks your REM dream sleep, an important part of the human sleep cycle.

SAROYAN HUMPHREY

LEFT TO RIGHT: KATE IN THE RENEW OFFICE; SHUTTERSTOCK

TOP EXPERIENCES FOR A RENEWED YOU

THE BIG FREEZE

Not to be confused with cryogenics—in which deceased bodies are stored in the deep freeze—cryotherapy is the coolest holistic technique to hit the healing scene in recent years. A favorite of local athletes (many Bay Area sports teams now have facilities in their locker rooms), cryotherapy treats a range of ailments, including muscle soreness.

The treatment involves standing naked in a vertical box filled with swirls of cooling liquid nitrogen (as seen below). Temperatures plunge as low as 275 degrees below zero. The cold reduces inflammation and swelling while releasing feel-good endorphins. Visit Walnut Creek’s Renew Cryotherapy for a full-body experience. renewcryotherapy.com.



Performed mostly while standing, laughter yoga employs clapping, dancing, and theatrical exercises. (Pretend you’re churning butter; pretend you’re a car wash; pretend you’re a chicken.) Then comes the laughter—lots of it.

Proponents point to myriad health benefits, including lower cortisol levels and blood pressure, resulting in an endorphin high that naturally accompanies laughing. Your mother was right when she said that laughter is the best medicine. meetup.com/oaklandlaughterclub.

ESSENTIAL SMELLS

Scent has long been thought to ease a potpourri of ailments, from headaches and anxiety to depression and digestion issues. Recently, there’s been an explosion of interest in aromatherapy, with healing centers and spas adding treatments that feature the subtle power of essential oils.

The Woodhouse Day Spa in Walnut Creek has seen a rise in popularity of its sleep remedies that utilize scents such as lavender, cedarwood, marjoram, and ylang-ylang. The Deep Sleep treatment, which combines aromatherapy and a healing touch, is sure to send you off to dreamland. walnutcreek.woodhousespas.com.



NATUROPATH KNOWS BEST

Whether battling serious medical conditions or just trying to ward off the common cold, many patients of naturopathic doctors experience impressive results. Treatment plans work as stand alones or in tandem with traditional medicine. One expert to try: Heather Barrett at Walnut Creek Naturopathic.

Utilizing a wide range of modalities from homeopathic remedies to ozone therapy, naturopaths work in conjunction with modern medical science, combining traditional lab tests with newer techniques that examine metal toxicity, allergy sensitivities, MTHFR hormones, small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) in the gut, and circulating tumor cells—just to name a few. walnutcreeknaturopathic.com.

LAUGH IT OUT

Forget Downward Dog. The only thing laughter yoga has in common with traditional yoga is that it was invented in India. Instead of pretzel poses, at Oakland Lifefire Laughter Yoga you’ll find gentle, full-body swaying motions aimed at releasing physical tension.

TRY IT

People with respiratory problems and skin ailments might want to try salt therapy. At Salt Spa Walnut Creek, you can recline in a salt cave (a room caked in salt from floor to ceiling) while a light salt mist filters over you. Just breathe. saltspawalnutcreek.com.

CALM IT

PRESS PAUSE. HERE ARE SIX WAYS TO REBOOT YOUR LIFE IN THE NEW YEAR, INCLUDING SOUND BATHS, DIGITAL DETOX, AND AN ELEGANT NEW RETREAT IN THE WOODS.

By Tam Putnam

CHRISTINE CARTER

WELLNESS EXPERT

Put that phone of yours away, and take a digital break. That's the advice of Christine Carter, a sociologist and senior fellow at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, which sponsors studies on well-being and compassion. When asked for ideas on navigating modern life, she makes the phone her first target.

"There's new research that the mere presence of a cellphone impairs us cognitively," says Carter. "Even a phone turned off and face-down on your desk inhibits your ability to focus and to solve problems. The solution is not self-control; it's about creating a structure—removing the phone from the line of sight and sound."

With four children and a demanding work schedule, Carter has plenty of incentive to create useful structures. She cuts down on decision making (from Monday meatballs to Tuesday tacos, her weekday dinners never vary) and knows that downtime is not only a source of calm, but also of new ideas. Born into an East Bay olive-growing family, she offers a metaphor from the orchard: Olive trees alternate

abundant harvests with years of lower production. In other words, don't imagine you can work at full capacity without a break.

According to Carter, anyone with a goal for 2018 should set up routines to help them achieve it. "I love New Year's resolutions," she says. "They are about getting into new habits that make our lives healthier and happier, without using up precious willpower."

A good first step in creating a new structure is to establish a keystone habit—such as leaving your running shoes by the bed, if you want to start jogging in the morning—or using a cue, like setting your alarm. Another key is to identify an intrinsic reward, like the juicy mystery stories Carter listens to when—and only when—she exercises.

In her books *The Sweet Spot* and *Raising Happiness*, Carter synthesizes research in psychology and neuroscience, without the patronizing tone used by many self-help authors. Reclaiming life from the clutter of distraction and what she calls "the culture of busyness" seems, with Carter's guidance, entirely possible.



LAURA MING WONG

“THE SOLUTION IS NOT SELF-CONTROL; IT'S ABOUT CREATING A STRUCTURE ...”

—CHRISTINE CARTER

CARTER'S THREE TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF WORK AND HOME LIFE:

"When we want to focus on our deep, more important work," says Carter, "we need a system in place in which we do not have the constant threat of distraction."

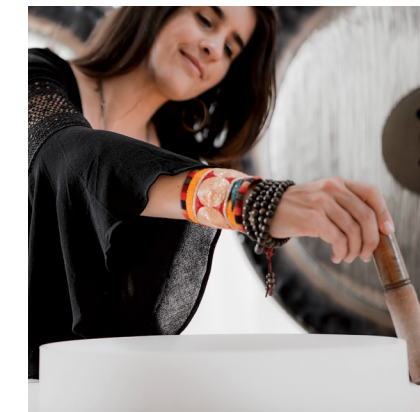
1. Set aside a chunk of the day for concentrated work, and banish all distractions from your office.
2. When you're in deep-work mode, turn off phone notifications, except for your kids' school or other emergency contacts you might have.
3. Let colleagues know that when you're at home, you're unavailable during certain hours, such as family mealtime or late at night.

LEFT TO RIGHT: COURTESY OF MELISSA FELSENSTEIN; COURTESY OF 1440 MULTIVERSITY

COOL TOOLS TO RECLAIM YOUR BALANCE

THE SOUND OF SERENITY

A dozen people lie on yoga mats with their eyes closed, listening to the tinkling of chimes. The gentle sounds then drop to a lower register, as Melissa Felsenstein takes a padded rubber mallet to quartz crystal bowls and metal gongs, creating notes that swoop, thrum, and reverberate. Felsenstein (pictured below) leads sound meditation workshops throughout the East Bay that surround participants with otherworldly aural waves evoking tuning forks, humming, or occasionally, the tone your refrigerator makes when the house is quiet. The sea of sound induces alpha and theta brain waves, she says, which are associated with calmness and creativity. innersoundsyoga.com.



CATCH THE DRIFT

Your mind slows as you drift in a womblike float tank shaped like a giant white egg. It's quiet, dark, and filled with body-temperature water that buoys you via the magic of Epsom salt. The scrum of thoughts thins out, and even if you don't feel returned to the womb exactly, your mind slips into a meditative state. Ever since 2015, when Stephen Curry espoused the benefits of recharging in float tanks, the practice has earned fresh attention in the East Bay. Immerse yourself at Rejuvenation Spa in Pleasanton's new fitness center, Hub925, or at the sleek Reboot Float

TRY IT

After a treatment at Changes Salon and Day Spa in Walnut Creek, take a seat in its new plump-as-a-marshmallow acoustic body-balancing chair. Headphones emit ambient music synced to the chair's vibrating, low-frequency audio waves. As the spa guide said, "It's like being inside a cello." changesalon.com.

and Cryo Spa in Oakland's Rockridge district. hub925.org, rebootspa.com.

UNWINDING TRADITION

The Korean-style spa at Psy Health Town in San Leandro is unconcerned with dim lighting and Zen music; instead, it offers a brightly lit bodily attack that leaves you oddly relaxed and tranquil. Yes, you'll feel pummeled when the masseuse lights into you—but afterward, your muscles will seem delightfully rubbery and loose. A traditional Korean *jjimjilbang* (bathhouse) like Psy is the place to get a facial, lounge in the sauna, endure full-body exfoliation, enjoy the stone-studded Jade Room, and revel in hours of mostly naked unwinding. psyspausa.com.

RETREAT FROM IT ALL

Repurpose a Bible college set on 75 acres of forested land near Santa Cruz, turning the chapel into a modernist sanctuary for yoga and other classes. Add Craftsman-style buildings—all river rock and enormous wood beams—and an infinity-edge whirlpool. Then, invite big names in yoga, mindfulness, professional coaching, and alternative healing. Welcome to 1440 Multiversity—part TED talk, part meditation retreat, part polished resort. Over the next few months, instructors will include a former Navy SEAL (leadership skills), a UC San Francisco professor (the science of aging), singer Alanis Morissette, and Buddhist luminary Sharon Salzberg. The center (seen below), which opened last summer, is just starting to hit its stride, but it looks to become the Esalen of the redwoods. 1440.org.



WORK IT

SHAKE OUT OF YOUR WINTER FITNESS RUT WITH THESE EXPERT TIPS, EVENTS, AND CALORIE-BURNING CLASSES.

By Katie Henry

RANDY MYERS
FITNESS EXPERT

Behind his toned physique, Randy Myers holds a (not so well-kept) secret: He used to smoke a pack a day. His cholesterol was pretty high. And extra pounds? Yep, he had them.

From his twenties to his forties, Myers was a journalist with a typically sedentary desk job complete with pizza dinners, limited physical activity, and lower back pain. He dabbled in going to the gym, but nothing ever stuck.

After a doctor's visit that left him rattled and a pep talk from a spin instructor, Myers finally realized he needed to change. He signed up for the 545-mile AIDS/LifeCycle ride—without even owning a bike—and turned his life around.

Now a certified personal trainer, group fitness instructor, and spin teacher at Equinox gyms, the downtown Berkeley YMCA, and UC Berkeley, Myers wants to spread the message that anyone can transform into a fit person.



LAURA MING WONG

“MANY PEOPLE WANT THE BEST BICEPS, BUT IT’S IMPORTANT TO PROTECT THE WHOLE BODY.”
—RANDY MYERS

MYERS’ THREE TIPS TO KICK OFF YOUR FITNESS JOURNEY:

1. Switch up your routine. Incorporate lateral and rotational movements—such as adding golf swings to balance out running or riding a bike.
2. Work your core. One way to strengthen that section of the body is through balance exercises using the TRX suspension trainer, which gives you a bit of support while engaging those mid-body muscles.
3. Don’t forget to cool down. If something gets tight and overused, another part of the body will overcompensate—which can lead to other injuries over time. So grab that foam roller and get to it.

LEFT TO RIGHT: SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY OF BOLLYX—THE BOLLYWOOD WORKOUT

BEST BETS FOR WORKING UP A SWEAT

RUN TO GIVE BACK

Get a New Year’s resolution on your calendar by training for the Lafayette Reservoir Run for Education, a 5K, 10K, or two-mile fun run on October 21. Benefiting Lafayette schools and the chamber of commerce, this race is a local favorite—1,700 runners showed up at the starting line last year. Plus, it’s a perfect way to set a goal to keep the fitness momentum all year long. lafayettechamber.org.

TWIRL YOURSELF CONFIDENT

Looking for a workout where you can feel empowered? Head to Benicia’s J. Power Studio, where you can take barre, yoga, spin, or—for the brave and strong—pole lessons. With classes for all comfort levels, introverts and exhibitionists alike are welcome. Take an Intro to Pole class to learn the basics in a space filled with newbies, or get comfortable upside down in PoleVersions. Those looking for something a little different while getting toned should check out Pole Fit—a combo of upper body strength moves and conditioning with cardio bursts. Get out of your comfort zone and onto the stage without any judgment. jpowerstudio.com.

GET DIRTY

If rolling in the mud is your idea of letting loose, then sign up for the Mud Factor obstacle race on April 21. Held at Club Moto in Livermore, this entirely for-fun obstacle course is fit for the whole family. Since the adult 5K course gets shortened to a 3K course for the kiddos, you can run with your mini-me before tackling the larger, more grown-up challenges, such as wire crawls and wall climbs. Forget the high pressure and bulging muscles of the intense Spartan race; if an obstacle is not for you, skip it without any penalties. The Mud Factor team just wants you to have a dirty good time. mudfactor.com.



MOVE IT BOLLYWOOD STYLE

When you step foot into a BollyX class, you enter a high-energy, big-fun dance party. But you don’t need to be a skilled dancer to feel welcome here. Cofounder Shahil Patel (pictured below, on the right)—a UC Berkeley alum—will tell you he was born with two left feet, but with the help of this Bollywood-style choreography, he learned how to unleash his inner rock star. BollyX combines high-interval bursts, cardio, and strength segments, but focuses on having a blast. And while you’ll burn serious calories, instructors consider the confidence boost and community bonding the ultimate goals. Check out classes at the YMCA in Pleasant Hill and Oakland, or online starting in the new year. bollyx.com.



TRY IT

We asked Chuck Woolridge, head cross-country and track coach at Moraga’s Campolindo High, for some training tips to help those tackling the 5K and 10K races at the Lafayette Reservoir in October.

1. Increase your weekly training volume and run distance gradually, by about 10 percent each week. And maintain a relatively easy to moderate pace on your runs.
2. Include some form of hill training, especially if you are taking on the 10K, to prepare both physically and mentally.
3. Once or twice a week, finish an easy run with four 100-meter strides to develop efficient coordination between your brain and your working muscles.

EAT IT

FEELING A LITTLE WEIGHED DOWN? HIT THE RESET BUTTON WITH THESE EASY—YET IMPACTFUL—DIETARY CHANGES.

By Kristen Haney

JOAN VATTUONE
DIET EXPERT



You don't have to be struggling with irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes, or heart disease to see Kaiser Permanente registered dietitian Joan Vattuone—although she does specialize in those conditions. A visit to a health professional like Vattuone can be prompted by simple concerns, such as attempting to eat healthier, lose weight, or resolve other nutrition-related health issues.

"If you're struggling, or having a hard time figuring out what works for you, we're able to guide [people] in a way they maybe haven't thought of, or didn't realize a path that's right for them," says Vattuone, who's been in the business for almost two decades.

Like many dietitians, Vattuone personalizes the changes she recommends for her clients—both in terms of lifestyle and food intake—to ensure long-lasting results that sustain them way beyond normal fad diets. "There's no easy way to get to a healthy weight or be healthier," she says. "We focus on the changes somebody can make and actually stick with. One of the biggest challenges is

people trying to do too much and getting burned out."

According to Vattuone, bringing "eating to the conscious level, where people are aware of what they're choosing and how much they're choosing," is an easy way to monitor food habits.

But what about those fad diets? Vattuone says meal plans such as Whole 30, ketogenic, or those based on blood type may have their merits, but the key is viewing lifestyle changes as sustainable—not with a deadline.

"I think a lot of those fad diets work great while people are on them, but most people have a hard time sticking with them," she acknowledges.

"You want it to be a diet you feel comfortable with, where you're eating and you're not hungry," says Vattuone. "But you also want to make sure it's a lifestyle you're comfortable with. If the things you do at every level are sustainable, you're going to have much better success—not just short term, but long term."

“WE FOCUS ON THE CHANGES SOMEBODY CAN MAKE AND ACTUALLY STICK WITH.”

—JOAN VATTUONE

VATTUONE'S THREE TIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DIET SUCCESS:

1. If time is your biggest opponent, buy washed and chopped veggies at local grocery stores. Or keep a supply of staples in your fridge or pantry, such as whole-wheat pasta, beans, or ground turkey.
2. Prep a typical meal, then swap zucchini noodles or cauliflower rice for their carb-rich counterparts.
3. Track food intake and portion sizes by writing down your meals or using a meal-tracking app.

LAURA MING WONG

LEFT TO RIGHT: REGINA FELICE PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY OF HOMEMADE MEALS

SAVVY PICKS FOR HEALTHY EATS

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET DARLING

Proponents of anti-inflammatory, Paleo, and carb-reduced diets all champion the benefits of bone broth, which range from decreasing inflammation and food allergy triggers, to supporting joint health, to boosting collagen. For anyone looking to try it, Oakland-based Broth Baby delivers—literally.

The company offers subscription deliveries of its chicken and beef broths—sourced locally from pasture-centered farms—to Berkeley and Oakland homes, and to Alameda, Lamorinda, and Walnut Creek through Good Eggs. (You can also find Broth Baby at Oakland's Grand Lake farmers market every Saturday.)

Sip it straight and slightly warm for an instant energy boost. And even those who eschew meat can reap the benefits of broth with Broth Baby's new mineral-rich veggie version. brothbaby.com.



GROW YOUR OWN GREENS

It's easy enough to plant a seed and watch it grow if you've got the dirt. But an increasing number of businesses are bringing the joys of nurturing a green thumb (and scoring fresh-from-the-earth produce) to East Bay residents who have limited access to garden space.

Oakland's Farmscape Gardens—the largest urban farming venture in California—scopes

TRY IT

"Adaptogens" are a new superfood turning up at local cafés that may help people reduce stressors—physical, chemical, biological, emotional, and environmental. Project Juice in Berkeley offers five different adaptogen lattes, and The Well Café in Oakland serves up an adaptogen-packed elixir, too. projectjuice.com, thewell-cafe.com.

out, installs, and helps maintain gardens in greenery-challenged places. Farmscape specializes in raised beds, and can take the toil out of maintaining your soil with a weekly farming service that includes pest control, irrigation, and harvesting. farmscapegardens.com.

SLAM-DUNK MEAL DELIVERY

Alamo's Ayesha Curry (pictured below) is already a cookbook author and Food Network host, so what's the next logical step? Tackling a common conundrum with the launch of her meal-delivery service, Homemade.

While similar to services such as Blue Apron or Sun Basket, Homemade puts the emphasis on family. Recipes are designed to please picky eaters—as well as parents—with familiar yet healthy meal options and pre-portioned ingredients.

Each box comes with a coloring book centered around The Supper Sisters, Riley and Ryan (Curry's daughters), and little ones can also participate with Homemade Kids—the first meal-delivery kit specifically designed to help children hone their culinary skills—or just have fun making a mess. cookhomemade.com.



MAKE ROOM FOR MORINGA

It seems like every few months, there's a buzzy new superfood promising to be a cure-all, but moringa is a plant-based powerhouse that's actually worth the hype.

Moringa has been touted as the new kale, as it's high in protein, iron, calcium, vitamins, and antioxidants. Oakland's Kuli Kuli sources an organic, socially responsible version of the protein-rich plant from women-led farms and cooperatives in West Africa to fuel its supplements, protein powders, bars, and energy drinks.

The power-packed plant is available online, at local grocery stores, and at several East Bay eateries. kulikulifoods.com.