

Column #3-2005:

Dear IOWA:

***The "Early-Early" Garden...***

I finally remembered to plant my spinach and lettuce before the ground thaws! Next, I have to place some screening over the planted area to keep the birds from scratching out the seeds and then, hopefully, as soon as it warms up, the seeds will sprout for early greens.

***Organic Naturally Foraged Teas...***

You may recall that last fall I gathered and dried many different herbs and flowers. I have been making my own teas. You can buy these at the local health food store. For a 2 cup pot of tea, I put the following in the mesh cup inside the tea pot: 2 rosehips, 2 clover heads, a smidgeon of spearmint leaves, smushed between my fingers as I put them in the tea pot (note the use of very colloquial language!), and about a heaping 1/2 tsp. of alfalfa, finely ground. Let this steep and add some honey. Delicious, I promise, and loaded with good nutrients! I reused this for a second pot of tea and just added a bit more alfalfa and the strength was just fine. The rosehips are pretty thick and strong, so they can be steeped more than once for their nutrients.

***More on Breathing for Detox...From the Daily Om, February 23, 2005***

1. Our bodies are attuned to the wisdom of many millions of years of evolution and communicate with us through each moment of our lives. Listening to your body by acknowledging and acting on feelings of comfort and discomfort, illness and health, or happiness and despair can lead you to a better understanding of the body's needs.

2. To fuel the fire that is your being, it is vital to consume only that which will benefit the body. Processed and artificial foods should be replaced with fresh produce and whole grains. Exploring macrobiotics, vegetarianism, and other unique diets can become a culinary adventure.

3. There is no medication so formidable as rest. When you sleep uninterrupted for a period of eight hours, your body's natural healing and rejuvenating abilities are free to work unencumbered by physical and mental stresses.

4. Our breath is always with us. Breathing deeply and deliberately provides nourishment in the form of oxygen to the body but also acts to relax the brain and nervous system.

5. The human form has adapted for activity and something is lost when we deny ourselves movement in all forms. Exercise and stretching not only improve the body, increasing the effectiveness of the lungs and circulatory system while expelling toxins and boosting immunity, but also lifts the spirits by stimulating the body's flow of pleasurable endorphins.

6. Yoga unites the mind and the body, promoting health in both. Regular practice of the discipline's complex movements tone and stimulate the physical form while increasing concentration, decreasing stress, and inspiring well-being.

7. The human body possesses the ability to cleanse itself. When you fast, you trigger this ability, prompting beneficial enzymes to enter the bloodstream, where they eliminate accumulated wastes such as pollutants and metabolic wastes, to rebuild immunity and restore health.

8. Balance must prevail for health to exist. Meditation can help you achieve a healthful balance in body and soul. Concentration, meditative breathing, or visualizations focus the mind and allow negativity to drain away, leaving you with a sense of control and self-awareness. Find your bliss.

9. Home is the heart of health and a change in your environment can inspire positive changes within your body. Explore Feng Shui, color therapy, or new methods of organization. Clearing the clutter in your home's pathways may clear clutter in your body and soul.

10. Challenges can be exhilarating at first but, when prolonged, cause stress. Sustained stress can lead to weakened immune function, sickness, fatigue, anxiety, and depression. Take time out to care for your self and focus on relaxing solitary pursuits.

11. Look on the bright side of life. Laughter lowers levels of stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol and increases the levels of pleasurable endorphins within the body, leaving you with a happy afterglow and tension-free muscles. A positive outlook improves immunity and promotes faster healing after surgeries or illness.

### ***Early Spring on the Farm...My Chickens...***

Every day now I gather a lovely basket of colorful eggs. The pullets are also hiding eggs in the barn. There is a nest clear up in the hay mow that I have to climb onto a beam and then walk carefully over to the post to climb into the loose hay area and at the top of that, every day there are several pretty eggs awaiting! I must keep these gathered as I don't want my girls to start setting up there as it is far too dangerous a place with raccoons on the loose, too!

The broiler chicks have been ordered for late March delivery. I haven't raised chicks without hens for years now, so this will be a refresher course! I've ordered 50 broiler roosters.

### ***Black-Eyed Pea Patties with Corn and Cilantro***

4 cups cooked black-eyed peas, drained  
3 cups corn kernels  
2 tbs. Canola oil  
2 tsp. mashed garlic  
2 jalapeños, seeded and minced, or 1/2 cup canned chopped green chiles  
1/2 tsp. ground cumin  
1 cup minced scallions  
1/2 cup minced cilantro  
1 tsp. salt

1. Mash black-eyed peas coarsely with potato masher or electric mixer. Set aside.
2. Heat 1 tbs. Oil in skillet, and add garlic, jalapeños and cumin. Sauté 2 minutes, and add corn. Reduce heat to low; cook 3 minutes, stirring constantly.
3. Mix mashed peas, corn mixture, scallions, cilantro and salt; cool. Form into 6 patties about 1 inch thick and 4 inches round in diameter.
4. Heat large nonstick griddle over medium heat, and brush with remaining 1 tbs. Oil. Cook patties 5 minutes per side, or until golden, crisp and heated through. Serve hot. *Vegetarian Times*, February 2005, p. 102.

### ***Health News.***

From *Vegetarian Times*, February 2005, p. 13, a report showing that bottle-fed babies are 2x as likely to develop crooked teeth as breast-fed babies. The reason is that different muscles are used for sucking, causing the difference in muscle development around the mouth and palate and this affects the arrangement of teeth.

Also, at p. 27, information that exercise duration counts more than intensity in lowering cholesterol and that yoga also helps by reducing stress hormones, which in turn lower the cholesterol. The biggest problem is making exercise our habit as everything else seems to swamp us out of our best intentions!

### ***Creatives....***

This winter, I picked up knitting again, after many years of dormancy. After making a number of shawls, I decided to try to make mittens. I made a couple pair of mittens for myself and then tackled making "mitties" for a 2 year old and a 4 year old (grandbabies). After some experimentation, I have worked out a formula that actually turns out mitties that fit! These are fun to make and I frequently carry my little bag of knitting with me when we travel. It was a little complicated at first to work with 4 double pointed needles at a time, but now, it seems routine to do. So, if I can do it, anyone else can too.

### ***Principles of Mind-Body Integration: Therapeutic Techniques for Wholeness***

This is my standard statement about Qi Gong. As I have written about before, Qi Gong is considered to be about 3000 years old and originated in China. Qi Gong is beneficial for relaxation, flexibility and actually to promote strength without stress. Researchers find that we can help lower blood pressure, help with asthma attacks, promote healing and enhance our immunity through regular practice of Qi Gong. I am intrigued and enthused about the use of Qi Gong for persons with cancer.

The figure eight movements done with the palms together is especially good for our wrists and to make it even more whole body beneficial, let's work with the breath as we count in 1-2-3-4-5 while turning our wrists in one direction and out 1-2-3-4-5 as we turn our wrists the other direction. Really wring out the lungs on the out breath and the in will naturally refill. Focus, focus, focus on the breath and the movement. All else will go away for the time being and this is the moment of relaxation and healing in the body. Repeat, building up to 10 to 15 times. This is my urging again...consider the benefits of Qi Gong for your *self*.

*The Vistas of our Lives... & Pale Male in NYC...*

You all may have heard about Pale Male, the red-tailed hawk whose nest was torn down from an Eastside high rise at 927 Fifth Avenue in NYC and the consequent media coverage of Pale Male and his mate, Lola. These birds have been occupiers of the particular nest involved for a long time, having raised 23 chicks. Lola is Pale Male's fourth mate. An award winning PBS film has been made of these birds and people have come from all over the world to watch Pale Male and Lola. In a city that is largely made of concrete, these birds represent the environmental spirit of New Yorkers and the resulting support for the rebuilding of their nest was simply heart warming, at the least. It certainly renewed my faith in our humanity! As the National Audubon president stated "These hawks are ambassadors for the wild."

'Til next time when we'll explore more on body-mind-spirit issues affecting our health  
in "The WellFem-in-Law™" column. *Namasté*

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