

WELL NOW

Fall 2005



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

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Relax and Renew

Wonder whether meditation can confer benefits of stress reduction? One Peer Health Educator who experienced the "Relax and Renew" workshop describes her experience.

Dear Peer

Body image blues, birth control conversations and HIV infection in lesbians ... Peer Health Educators field questions from our readers.

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Don't get hookah-ed!

Tobacco is hazardous to your health regardless of whether it's smoked as cigarettes, cigars or through a hookah. Don't let the hype suck you in.

Essential Party tips

A short list for letting the good times roll without compromising your good health.

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Say Cheese!

Tillamook dairy goes bovine growth hormone free for its cheese. Read more on this healthy move by a pioneering local dairy.

S.A.N.E.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner is a new service offered at the Health Center this term. Students who are sexually assaulted and want to have forensic evidence collected for prosecution can now do so at the UO Health Center.

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Club Sports

Choose from among 42 different sports for fun, fitness and friendship. Find out how.

Economical and nutritious eating

If you believe you can't afford to eat well, compare the cost and nutrition breakdown of fast food vs. an easy to prepare home cooked meal.

“ While it is widely accepted that physical exercise is an important factor in reducing stress and maintaining good health, information is emerging that supports meditation as equally vital. ”

Relax & Renew

Get there through meditation

By Megan Smith

Could meditation facilitate the peace and happiness we are all searching for? Is it possible that this ancient wisdom improves health, as practitioners claim, through mental clarity and stress reduction? I sought out the answers to these questions last term in order to fulfill my own desire for peace and clarity.

Like many people, I often felt that I had too much on my mind — school, work, friends, future plans, and on and on. At times, I was unable to focus, deal with stress or enjoy life.

Getting started

My exploration into meditation commenced with a book entitled "Tibetan Wisdom for Western Life" by Arpaia, M.D. and Rappagay, Ph.D. with a foreword by the Dalai Lama. This book provides simple yet competent explanations for bringing peace into one's life via meditation. It provides realistic depictions of two students following a meditative journey with meditation classes and useful everyday applications.

Practitioners demonstrate that meditation has the ability to improve the lives of diverse individuals — athletes learn to improve focus, students learn to reduce stress levels and feel more energetic and increase mental clarity, parents increase patience. After reading about

meditation's vast benefits I decided that I needed to see for myself what changes it could facilitate in my own life.

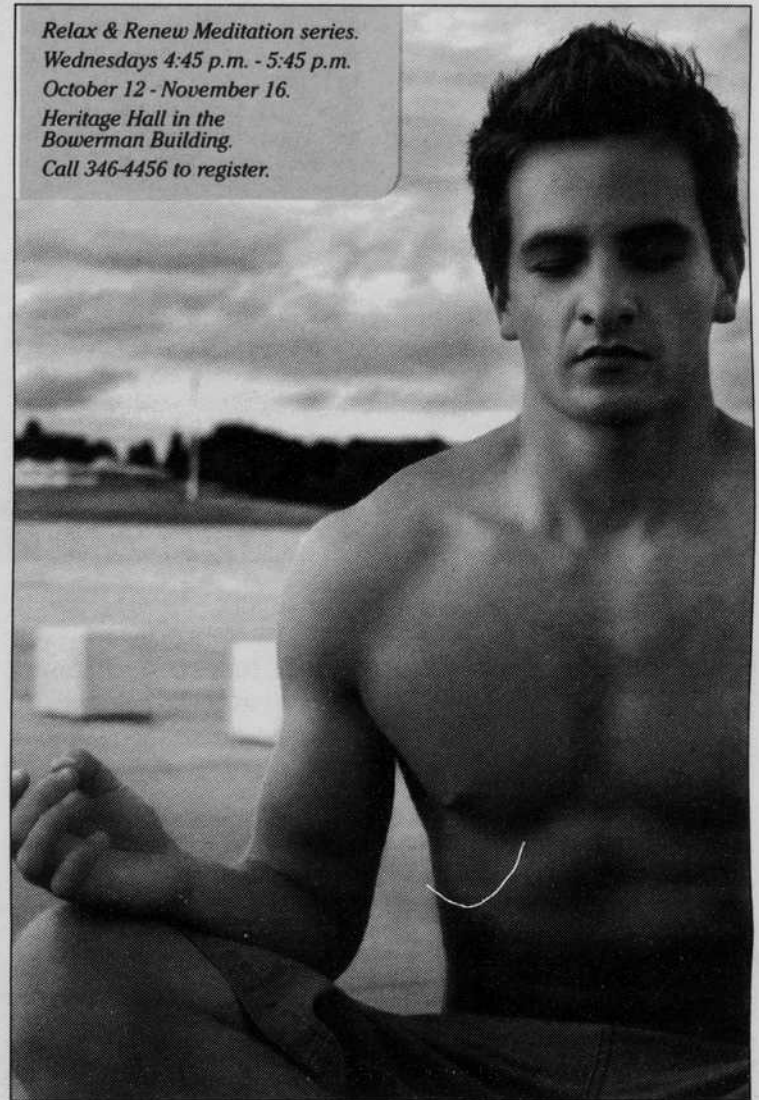
Vital practice

When I saw a flyer for the free class "Relax and Renew with Meditation" through the University Health Center, I jumped at the opportunity. The class, offered every term, is facilitated by Jude Kehoe LPN an expert in the practice of meditation and energy healing. Jude explained that our commonly held belief that stress is inevitable, causes many of us to disregard successful methods to reduce stress. While it is widely accepted that physical exercise is an important factor in reducing stress and maintaining good health, information is emerging that supports meditation as equally vital. In Jude's class we proceeded to learn several meditation techniques.

Plenty of time

Many individuals claim that they don't have enough time for meditation. The beauty is that meditation does not require large amounts of time, and can be performed almost anywhere. Jude says that even 10 minutes a day can make very beneficial changes. Paradoxically, meditation actually seemed to extend the time I had each day by improving mental focus and

Relax & Renew Meditation series.
Wednesdays 4:45 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.
October 12 - November 16.
Heritage Hall in the
Bowerman Building.
Call 346-4456 to register.



allowing me to better manage my time. It also helped me to fall asleep and to relax. Although meditation requires consistency and practice, it is much simpler than I'd imagined.

While a meditation book can help to improve understanding, I believe it's more important to practice. Having an expert personally guide you through the beginning steps of various

methods can be helpful. Every individual has a unique style of learning and practicing meditation and fortunately there are numerous classes offered through the University. The Health Resource Center in the EMU offers books on meditation, and sign-up sheets for the "Relax and Renew with Meditation" workshop. Check it out and find your own answers.

Dear Peer Insightful Advice on Today's Health Issues

By Kristin Cummings

Dear Peer,
One of my gay friends is convinced that lesbians can't contract HIV. She sounded pretty sure of herself. I started to believe her but I still have my doubts. Who is right? — In Suspense

Dear In Suspense,

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is found in blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. Any activity where individuals come into contact with these "high risk fluids" can lead to HIV transmission. The CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) keeps data on modes of transmission. And while lesbian transmission is not the most common route of spreading the virus, female to female sexual contact can lead to HIV transmission because of contact with these high risk body fluids.

Keep talking to your friend. It is very important to stop such myths as a way of

prevention. Feel free to drop by our Health Resource Center (located in the EMU) to pick up pamphlets on gay and lesbian health. There is also a wide selection of reading for the gay community in our lending library. Health Resource Center hours are Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 2 PM.

Dear Peer,
I'm a 21-year-old girl. I've had issues with body image in the past and thought this anonymous way would be the best to ask. What are my options for support so that I don't resort to horrible diet habits? — Being Smart

Dear Being Smart,

The Counseling Center offers both individual and group counseling for individuals with distorted body image. Their services are free to students and they can be reached at 346-3227. The Health Resource Center in the EMU has an extensive book

collection that you may find helpful. Books can be checked out for 2 weeks with student ID, and there's room to hang out and read too. We also provide computer health assessments, which offer quick and informative insights on body image issues. Stop by the Health Resource Center to check out all these support selections!

Dear Peer,
I am a girl that recently became sexually active and I am unsure how to talk to my partner about starting birth control. Any recommendations? — Frantic Freshman

Dear Frantic,

Having a solid grasp of birth control options is a great place to start. First off, realize that there's contraception to prevent pregnancy and there's protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). And in most cases they are not the same thing. Condoms are the only contraceptive method

(99% effective when used correctly) that also provides STI protection against many, but not all, STIs. There are several other contraceptive methods available at the Health Center (e.g. the pill, patch, ring, IUD, depo, diaphragm, and more) which will help prevent pregnancy, but offer little or no protection against STIs. Come pick some up information on each and free condoms at the Health Resource Center in the EMU.

When discussing the contraception and STI prevention methods each of you would like to use, why not share the basics about your sexual history? If either of you have been sexually active in the past, why not discuss STI testing? You can set up an appointment at the University Health Center. It may not feel like the most romantic date, but if you're honest, it does show a depth of caring that can go a long way to building a meaningful relationship. The Health Center can also set you up with an appointment to discuss free contraception methods with one of our practitioners. For appointments call 346-2770.