

Living 50+



Supplement to the March 31st 2021 Port Townsend/Jefferson County Leader

Yoga is a great exercise option for seniors

By Leslie Kelly

Yoga was something that Port Townsend resident Diana Cronin enjoyed when she was younger.

But at 58, she wasn't sure she'd be able to keep up in a yoga class.

"I knew that yoga was a great exercise," Cronin said. "It always felt so good to stretch those muscles. As I get older, I get stiffer and I need that stretching even more. So I figured I'd give it a try."

Cronin signed up for classes at Lizzy's Yoga Studio. She chose classes that were suggested for persons 50 years of age and older. That included the vinyasa slow flow yoga, which is a slower yoga with emphasis on deep breathing.

Lizzy Barr, owner of Lizzy's Yoga Studio in Port Hadlock and a certified yoga instructor, said Cronin is typical

of the older students she sees.

"More often than not, seniors tell me 'I can't do yoga' or 'I'm not flexible' or 'I'm not strong enough.'" They say 'I'm not young enough to start yoga.

"I have to remind them that yoga is a 'practice' for a reason. You practice yoga to improve your health, flexibility and strength. Too often yoga is portrayed as the high-intensity workout with 20-year-olds doing headstands. That's not what yoga is about. Yoga is about your body and your needs."

Jason Calysn, owner of Mystic Monkey Yoga in Port Townsend, hears similar things.

"I hear people say they are hesitant to try classes because they are afraid they won't be good at it," said Calysn, who is a certified yoga instructor. "Yoga is a great low-impact exercise which helps seniors with strength, flexibility, and maintaining bone density. It promotes weight loss, improves cardiovascular

and respiratory health, and it helps with controlling conditions such as diabetes and heart conditions."

Additionally, Calsyn said he's had clients who have reported great benefits in terms of quality of life issues — being able to bend over to tie their shoes, or reducing and eliminating chronic back pain.

According to AARP, the American Association for Retired Persons, yoga is one of the most popular exercises for seniors.

Its importance is in minimizing hypertension, strengthening bones, keeping weight down, reducing anxiety, and improving balance. It sharpens your mind and boosts your mood, say AARP health experts.

Both Barr and Calsyn said they offer classes that are designed to be taken by older clients. Warm Yoga Flow is a favorite for seniors who do yoga at Mystic Monkey. Chair yoga, restorative

yoga, pelvic floor yoga and vinyasa slow flow yoga are the favorites at Lizzy's Yoga Studio.

Barr said yoga has many benefits for seniors.

"Yoga can vastly improve mental

Here are some yoga poses suggested for seniors by exercise specialists with AARP:

In your 50s:

Chair pose, Tree Pose, Mountain

In your 60s:

Cobbler pose, Warrior Pose, Plank

In your 70s:

Half chair at the wall, Bridge, Lunge



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and physical health in seniors. Staying active is crucial for anyone's health, especially seniors, and yoga is a safe way to do that," she said.

Improving chronic pain, back pain, arthritis symptoms and reducing flare-ups are some of the benefits of yoga. Yoga also is good for your heart, circulation and can increase your energy levels, Barr said.

Calysn agrees and said yoga can do more than help your physical health.

"It helps our mental and emotional health tremendously by encouraging mindfulness, introspection, and being embodied fully in the present moment," said Calysn.

At Mystic Monkey, the atmosphere is low-key and very non-competitive.

"Even if you start out at a point of inflexibility or a beginner practice level, doing the classes will help you stretch out and make things attainable that seemed impossible before," Calysn said.

While the pandemic has altered yoga classes at both studios, classes are available on Zoom, or outdoors.

"We've tried classes outside at a park," Barr said. "Just anything that

can keep people active."

And Barr understands how important that is. She began yoga when she was at her lowest, she said.

"I had a terrible accident and couldn't walk," Barr said, "My chronic pain was through the roof, but I told myself every day that I needed to at least try yoga, and over the weeks, months and years, I almost completely recovered. That is why I went on to teach yoga, so I could specifically tell those who feel like they can't do yoga, that they can."

As for Cronin, who is an artist and potter, she's glad she went back to doing yoga.

"You don't have to be all that flexible," she said. "Just do what you can, and as you go you will become more flexible. I'm a cancer survivor, too, and yoga has helped me with my stress."

"Sometimes I might not feel like doing a class, but it always feels good when you take the time to do it."

To reach Lizzy's Yoga Studio call 360-302-1055 or check out www.lizzysyogastudio.com. Mystic Monkey Yoga can be reached at 206-794-2715. Its website is www.mysticmonkeyyoga.com.



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Maintaining your brain health can be fun and entertaining!

By Pam Scott

Home Care Consultant, Home Instead of Clallam and Jefferson Counties

Most Americans still devote more time to changing the oil, taking a car to a mechanic, or washing it, than thinking about how to maintain, if not improve, their brain performance. And many of us are a bit overwhelmed by all the information out there – do this, don't do that, try this, avoid that. We've all heard the tips – eat fish, take vitamins, exercise, eat healthy, don't imbibe (much), don't smoke, get rest, do crossword and Sudoku puzzles, play memory games, etc. These are all great ways to help boost brain longevity and there is quite a bit of research to back it up. But have you ever wondered if there was something else out there – something that might actually be more fun, interesting and even entertaining? Did you know that some of the things you do during your average day are actually helping your brain health? Check out some of these other ways of helping to maintain brain health.

DOODLE

Doodling helps the brain stay focused when you are engaged in mundane activities.

LAUGH

Laughing stimulates five different parts of your brain. Eat with chopsticks - learn to use chopsticks and you will provide your brain with stimulation. And if you laugh while doing it – even better!

MUSIC

Listening to music uses both the right and left brain and has shown to increase self-esteem along with brain strength.

JUGGLE

Juggling requires eye-hand coordination and uses parts of your brain that don't get much exercise and stimulation (however – would not suggest using eggs to practice with!).

SWITCH HANDS

Doing regular activities in a different way helps wake up the other side of your brain and helps keep it working and active. Try using your less dominant hand for simple tasks like eating, brushing your teeth, or writing to help keep your brain young.

SURF THE INTERNET

Scientists have shown that middle-aged and older adults who surf the Internet show brain activity that was once only attributed to younger brains, so keep your brain young by surfing the Internet. (Finally – validation for being a Google addict!).

EAT DARK CHOCOLATE

Chocolate triggers the systems in your brain that pump dopamine. These systems help with learning and memory, and having a bit of chocolate can boost these, keeping your brain fit and happy (not to mention your taste buds!).

SOCIALIZE

Socializing and staying close with friends and family is good for your health, longevity, and brain function – particularly during these strange times. But for the time being – please keep your socialization circle small, outdoors when possible, practice physical distancing, wear face coverings or go virtual.

TAKE A DIFFERENT ROUTE

Change up your routine and don't take your usual route to the store, work or wherever you're heading. Enjoy the change in scenery. It helps the brain to wake up when it has to process new surroundings.

THROW A BALL AROUND

A sensory-guided movement like throwing and catching a ball can improve your brain's visual, tactile and hand-eye coordination responses and keep them sharp well into the aging process.



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REARRANGE YOUR FURNITURE

It's amazing how accustomed your brain can become to an environment, but if you rearrange it, you'll be challenged every time you walk into the room. Word of caution – be careful in the dark.

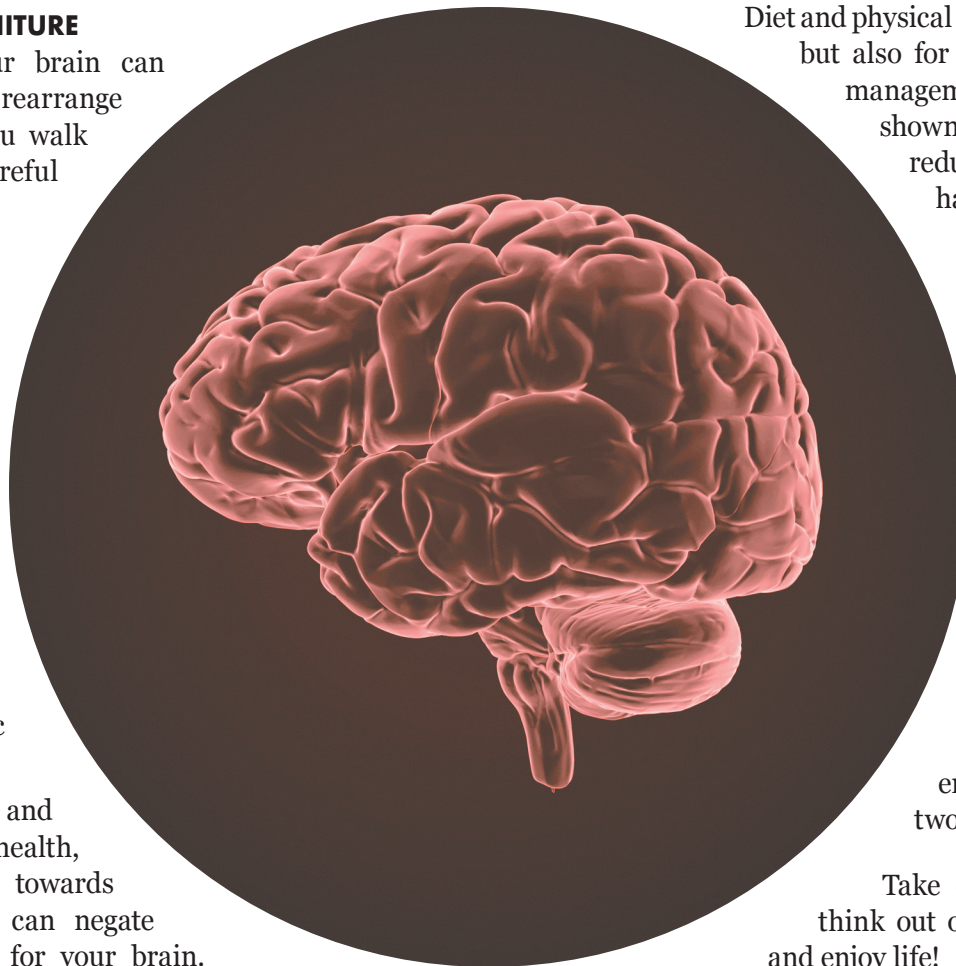
TEST YOUR RECALL

Make a list – of grocery items, things to do, or anything else that comes to mind – and memorize it. An hour or so later, see how many items you can recall. As you get more proficient at recall, make items on the list more challenging for the greatest mental stimulation.

DO MATH IN YOUR HEAD

Figure out problems without the aid of pencil, paper, or computer; you can make this more difficult – and athletic – by walking at the same time.

Now that you have had some fun and enjoyment while improving your brain health, please don't forget about working towards changing those lifestyle habits that can negate the good things that you have done for your brain.



Diet and physical exercise are not just for good brain health, but also for your overall physical well-being. Stress management is important since stress has been shown to actually kill neurons in the brain and reduce the rate of creation of new ones. And it has a negative impact on your physical self as well.

SLEEP

The body needs rest, but the brain requires sleep. Acute or chronic sleep deprivation can cause devastating short and long-term consequences to brain anatomy and function.

TAKE A MENTAL HEALTH BREAK

Workaholics that naively believe skipping lunch and staying glued to their chair will increase productivity are most likely actually getting less done than their relaxed counterparts. If you get up to take a 10-minute walk, it is enough to boost your energy level for up to two hours.

Take care of your brain. Challenge yourself, think out of the box, review your lifestyle choices, and enjoy life!

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Local foods help seniors keep in good health

By Leslie Kelly

There's something wonderful about biting into a big, juicy, red apple, or cooking with just-picked green beans. And there's a way to do that thanks to a program called Eat Local First.

Likewise, when you are aging, and want to eat right to keep in good health, locally grown fruits, vegetables, grains, and local eggs and meat can be more nutritious.

"Eating Local First means that you search for produce and other products that were grown closer to your geographical area in order to access healthier food and support your local community," said Andrea Stafford, marketing manager for The Food Co-op in Port Townsend. "We are lucky to live in an area ripe with farmers and locally grown foods."

Through the efforts of many who support eating locally, residents of Jefferson County and surrounding counties can join the Community Supported Agriculture program and know that what they are buying is locally grown. CSA, as the program is called, matches residents, or even restaurant owners, with farms in their area that grow the types of foods they are seeking.

Based on a program in Whatcom County, CSA membership and participation has grown in the past few years.

"There's definitely been an uptick in interest," said Kellie Henwood, regional small farms coordinator for WSU Extension in Jefferson, Clallam and Kitsap counties. "The pandemic has exposed us to gaps in the national food system. When people are in an emergency, they want their food. They want a reliable food supply, close by."

Henwood's job includes working with around 600 farmers in the area, helping them to create business plans, understand technical issues, and get knowledge about various crops. She teaches them about the CSA program and other ways that the farmers can get their products to local markets.

"There's a real sense of belonging when you sign up for CSA," Henwood said. "You know the farmer and you know where your food comes from."

The benefits of Eat Local First are many, according to Patricia Hennessy, director of the Local Food Trust, a philanthropic nonprofit that provides individuals and businesses the opportunity to invest directly in a regional food culture and economy.

"Buying local supports the local economy," said Hennessy. "Those dollars stay in the community and that's a benefit for all of us."

Another just as important benefit is the health value of local foods.

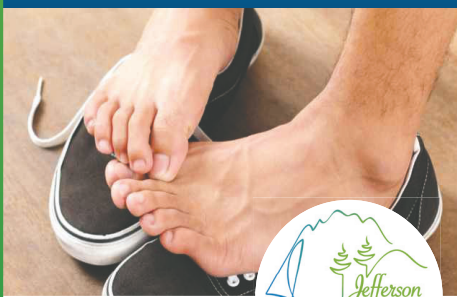
"They are more nutritious," she said. "Because they get to market sooner than the produce in the big box stores, they hold their nutritional value. And small producers are more conscious about how they grow their food. Their standards are very high. When you know your farmer, you know your food."

That's an important factor to anyone who buys local produce. But it's especially important to those who are 55 years of age and older. As age comes on, metabolism slows and good nutrition becomes vital.

"The truth is as soon as a vegetable or fruit is picked it starts losing its nutrients and taste," said The Food Co-op's Stafford. "Therefore, the farther the produce travels, the less nutrient dense the food is."

During the height of the growing season, 45 percent of The Food Co-op's produce is from the local area, Stafford said. And beyond that, the Food Co-op has local dairy, cheese, meat, grains and bread. Items like avocados, mangos and pineapples,

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however, are not grown local.

Local food enthusiasts know that people think buying local is more expensive and sometimes that keeps them from it.

“It can be,” said Henwood. “But farmers really want to make their products affordable. They want to get their products onto plates.

“It all depends on what your goal is. And often, you get more bang for your buck. You can get a huge bag of greens for a great price.”

Fresh produce also can last longer if properly stored, she said.

Where seniors are concerned, there are programs such as SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which help seniors afford locally grown food. And SNAP dollars can be used at farmers markets and food co-ops.

The county also has a farm to food bank program that allows local food to be distributed by food banks. And there are local gardens that grow produce to support those in need.

Henwood said another option in eating local is farm stands.

“My kids love going to the farm stands,” she said. “I let them pick out items like a bag of carrots. And stands aren’t crowded which is good for people, who because of COVID, don’t want to be in crowds.”

Restaurants in and near Port Townsend are also buying local food that is another way that community farmers are being supported.

“That’s been hurt by the pandemic, because so many restaurants closed for so long,” Henwood said. “But as they re-open restaurants will buy local.”

Seniors and others who are interested in making their meals with local foods and products can use the Washington Food & Farm Finder (<https://eatlocalfirst.org/wa-food-farm-finder/>). It lists the farmers by area so you can select a farm near you to partner with. Farms that participate in the Community Supported Agriculture program can help you become a member of CSA.

Just what should a senior’s diet consist of? Here are recommendations from the National Council on Aging:

5 servings of vegetables a day

4 servings of fruits a day

6 servings of grains per day (1/2 cup of rice, pasta, or one slice of bread equals a serving)

3 servings of dairy per day

8 servings of poultry, meat and eggs per week

2 servings of fish and seafood per week

5 servings of nuts, seeds, beans and legumes per week

3 servings of unsaturated fats and oils per day

Keys to good health for seniors:

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- **Look for important nutrients you need**
- **Read the nutrition labels**
- **Use recommended serving sizes**
- **Stay hydrated**

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Move Well, Live Well, Be Happy!

By Renee Klein
Co-Owner of
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“You’re only as old as your spine is inflexible,” said the famous yogi Angela Farmer (also credited with creating the first yoga mat from a piece of carpet underlay) at a workshop I attended years ago. Now 82, she moves with the ease of women half her age. Is it just the yoga? Undoubtedly an overall healthy lifestyle and other exercise – and perhaps good genes – are responsible.

As a Senior Fitness Instructor and Yoga Therapist, I’m often asked, what is the best exercise for those 50 and above? The answer is simple: the best exercise is the one you will actually do. If you make a New Year’s resolution to swim because “it’s good for you” yet you dislike swimming, how much pool time do you think you’ll actually get in by February?

Instead, I encourage people to do what they love. Crazy about old Motown songs? Crank up the music and dance in your kitchen 20 minutes every other day. Add in brisk walking on the other days and you’ll reach the (minimum) recommended 150 minutes a week moderate-intensity exercise.

And don’t forget activities to maintain strong bones and muscles. Adults should do muscle strengthening

activities that involve all major muscle groups – legs, hips, chest, back, core, shoulders and arms – at least twice a week. This can include lifting weights, using stretchy bands, or even using our own bodies as resistance such as in wall push-ups (more achievable for many of us than floor push-ups).

Remember as well to build in stretching and flexibility to your wellness routine. What if you prefer gardening to formal classes? That’s fine! Just learn how to safely, properly and gently mobilize your spine in all its directions (forward bends, backbends, lateral stretches and twists) while you’re bringing beauty to your yard.

Finally, find ways to work on your balance to help reduce the risk of falls and fractures. Whenever possible, choose exercise that is multicomponent,

meaning you’re doing more than one type of activity. Many forms of yoga for example, improve balance and coordination – skills particularly important as we age – while greatly enhancing flexibility.

As with other important things in life, variety is needed. If we only use the exercise bike or only play tennis, we use the same muscle groups and neglect others. Keep challenging yourself with new activities and new ways to do things; this is good for your brain, too!

Remember to build an exercise program gradually and with proper form, and to check with your health care provider if you’re unsure about what’s appropriate for you. Oh one more thing – don’t forget to have FUN, because all those endorphins floating around will make you happier!

Anti-Aging Naturally By: Molly Force, ND

How old are you - really? You know your chronological age from your birthday, but is that the correct measurement? You’ve probably noticed that people seem to age at different rates. The answer may make us change how we think about our age. Rather than counting candles on a cake, we should be measuring specific biomarkers of age.

As we age we start noticing symptoms. These signs may be a sign you are having hormonal issues. It’s easy to take your hormones for granted, until the balance shifts. Levels start to decline, nasty symptoms show up, and we start to feel older than we want to feel. Your

hormones impact your sleep, energy, libido, mood and much more. From brain fog and cognitive changes to generalized inflammation, joint pain, loss of skin elasticity and bone density, hormonal imbalance can rapidly age us.

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Smart ways to embrace retirement

Retirement is on the horizon for a significant number of people. Around 10,000 people retire each day in the United States, according to a study by Merrill Lynch and Age Wave, a consultancy studying the cultural and economic impacts of aging. But many soon-to-be retirees are not fully prepared for life after their work life ends. Shedding new light on this next chapter can make retirement something to look forward to even more.

HOW RETIRED ARE YOU?

Retirement may no longer mean what it once did. Some retirees remove themselves entirely from the active employment market, while others prefer to keep at least one toe in the professional water. Some retirees change fields and do part-time work. Others may volunteer their time without getting paid. Still, some choose to use retirement as an opportunity to spearhead a new business

venture that may not have been possible beforehand. Retirees should reflect on their goals, as well as their finances, and make plans accordingly.

DON'T NEGLECT HEALTH CARE

Retiring may involve finding health insurance and preparing for other types of health care later in life. The U.S. Census Bureau says that employment-based insurance covered 55.4 percent of the population in 2015, the most recent years for figures, followed by Medicaid (19.5 percent) and Medicare (16 percent). Residents of other countries may be covered by government standardized health programs. It pays to know the rules of each plan to avoid unnecessary expenses that can eat into retirement dollars. For those Americans who will be relying solely on Medicare, find a counselor who can spell out the intricacies of the plan, or use the free tool on Medicare.gov.

SEE RETIREMENT AS A BEGINNING, NOT AN END

Quite often soon-to-be retirees focus on the end of a career or the end of a stage in life without putting enough focus on the possibilities ahead. This is a prime time to find a new social network, travel, join a ministry, and much more.

CHOOSE YOUR LIVING SPACE

Retirement can be an opportunity to shed an old skin and try on a new one — especially as it pertains to housing. There are options to downsize for empty-nesters or even to secure resources to “age in place.” According to United Income, a money management service, retirees should try out particular scenarios and locations prior to jumping in. Rent in a particular neighborhood, or house sit and try things on for size. Airbnb and other types of services can make this trial easy.

A new outlook on retirement can open up a world of opportunities.



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How expenses can change during retirement



Work is a major component of daily life, so much so that Andrew Naber, an industrial and organizational psychologist and an associate behavioral scientist at RAND Corp., determined that the average person spends 90,000 hours at work over the course of his or her lifetime. According to a 2014 Gallup poll, the average American retires at age 62, but roughly 64 percent of professionals bid farewell to the workplace between ages 55 and 65.

Retirees must make a number of adjustments once they call it a career. No such adjustment is as significant as the financial one. Most people find their post-retirement income is considerably less than when they were working full-time. That is why financial planners often recommend saving and investing enough during working years to be able to replace 80 percent of preretirement income. Certain expenses get lower after retirement, but some will rise. Here's a look at what to expect when the bills come due during retirement.

- Food costs: Food costs may go down in retirement because shopping and preparing meals

for one or two people is much less costly than feeding a family of four or more. However, dining out may increase as you have more free time to visit local eateries.

- Automotive costs: According to data from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the average commuter spends 25.8 minutes behind the wheel twice a day, and the average driver puts in 13,474 miles behind the wheel each year — with people between the ages of 35 and 54 clocking close to 15,000 miles. Less time spent in the car means fewer gasoline fill-ups and longer durations between oil changes and other services. In addition, based on the Internal

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- **Taxes:** Many people can expect to be done paying federal income taxes when they are retired and no longer earning an income. If the majority of retirement savings were in Roth IRA accounts, contributions are available for withdrawal tax- and penalty-free at any age.
- **Housing:** Your mortgage may be paid off before or soon after retirement. That eliminates the single largest expense in many people's budgets. If your home will not be paid off, it's possible

to downsize to reduce monthly payments.

- **Travel:** While many other expenses can go down, travel is one expense that can shoot up during retirement. But many people are happy to bear this cost. With more time for travel, retirees may allocate more funds toward vacations and other great escapes.
- **Health care:** Seniors often see their health care needs and costs go up after retirement. It's important to understand what is covered by health plans, and it's equally important to set money aside for unforeseen medical expenses.

Many costs of living decrease after retirement. However, it is wise to take in the whole picture to understand how to budget for retirement.

Hydrate and refresh dry skin

Dehydrated skin is one of the many causes of facial wrinkling. Aging skin doesn't produce as much collagen and elastin, which allows skin to spring back into place, as it once did. Conditions like dry, dehydrated skin may make wrinkles appear worse. Treating dehydration and dryness may reduce wrinkles and refresh dry skin, giving it a more youthful appearance.

Those who want to treat dry, dehydrated skin must understand the difference between hydration and moisturizing as it applies to skincare. According to Annemarie Gianni, a skincare aesthetician and creator of Annemarie Skin Care, hydrating skin means increasing its water content by increasing the amount of water contained in skin cells. This can result in a healthy, plump complexion. Skin that is properly hydrated will keep fine lines and wrinkles from being overly apparent.

Moisturizing skin involves applying a lubricant that mimics your skin's natural lipids and oils that protect and soothe.

Hydration and moisturizing often work hand-in-hand. In addition to drinking plenty of water to hydrate, individuals can use products that contain hyaluronic acid, glycerin and sodium hyaluronate. These are known as humectants. In addition, the National Center of Biotechnology Information says that aloe can improve water content in the skin. Once water is bound to the skin, a moisturizer will prevent the water

from leaving it. Look for moisturizers with natural oils and butters to help retain moisture, like cocoa butter.

Here are additional methods to maximize skin hydration:

- Take warm showers, as hot water can strip the natural lipids from skin and cause dryness.
- Avoid too many alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic drinks are diuretics that cause the body to lose water.
- Use a humidifier indoors to amp up the moisture level in the air.
- Enjoy water-rich foods, like watermelon, cucumber, and grapes.
- Limit your consumption of caffeinated and sugary beverages.
- Work out to improve blood flow and oxygenation in the skin.
- Try a facial essence. Facial essences are a principle of Japanese beauty regimens and contain fermented ingredients that support skin penetration and hydration.

Anyone concerned about dry or dehydrated skin can get further advice by speaking with a qualified dermatologist or aesthetician.

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