

Eastwind Healing Center Newsletter, Number 8

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Eastwind Healing Center
221 E College St, Suite 211
Iowa City, IA 52240
(319) 337-3313; fax: (319) 337-0686
[Email the Center](#)

Iowa's complete complementary and alternative medicine center

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Welcome to this edition of the Eastwind Healing Center newsletter. Did you miss us last month? We hope your holidays were peaceful, joyous, and hassle-free.

As winter begins to wind down, thoughts turn to Spring, gardening, baseball, and constipation. Huh? No, really. Many people do Spring cleaning in their bodies, just as they do in their houses. The sluggishness of Winter, and the dryness of our home environments, often lead to a buildup of toxins in the body. This buildup often shows as constipation. A good Spring cleanse is often exactly what the body is looking for. So this month we'll give you some suggestions (the straight poop, if you will) on how to [cleanse](#), and how to deal with [constipation](#).

We welcome feedback on our newsletter, and would love to hear from you if you have a request for coverage of a topic from a holistic perspective. [So, email us already!](#)

Staff Announcements:

- The Conscious Birth Summit, organized by Kristin Bergman, LMT and participated in by several of Eastwind's practitioners, was a rousing success, with over 200 attendees. Great work, gang!
 - There has been a change in our reception staff. Stephanie Moyer has left us to work with the youngsters at Willowwind School in Iowa City (she must love to work at places with "wind" in the name). Her duties have been taken over by Courtney Jones, LMT. Our other receptionist is still the wonderful Anna Evans, LMT. Both Anna and Courtney also do massage at Eastwind Healing Center.
 - Dr. Betsy Rippentrop, Eastwind psychologist, is broadening her expertise by taking yoga teacher training in the Anusara tradition. This is a 200-hour, year-long training program.
 - At the end of March, there will be a training program offered in Chi Nei Tsang (Internal Organ Qi Massage). The instructor is Shanti Dechen, a famous teacher in Mantak Chia's system of health and wellness. This program is sponsored by Eastwind School, our next door neighbor. Chi Nei Tsang is advanced training, open to experienced healthcare professionals only. Call Jenny Wolffe, LMT at Eastwind Healing Center for information.
 - And last but not least: There will be an open house at Eastwind Healing Center on Friday, April 11th, from 5 - 8 p.m. Come pay us a visit! More details will be forthcoming as the date draws nearer.
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Joseph Mizelle, LMT



Do you ache? Have stiff muscles? How about that persistent knot in your back? Sound familiar? Life in a body can be difficult, and everyone has muscle tension that becomes more than just a nuisance sometimes... These are the times to seek help!

A bodywork therapy session with Joseph Mizelle may be just the thing you need to tip the balance from feeling lousy to feeling great!

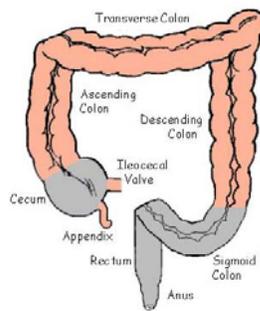
Joseph has been practicing bodywork since 2001 and is an alumnus of the Eastwind School of Holistic Healing. Joseph integrates a number of therapeutic approaches in his sessions, custom-tailored to his clients' needs. Shiatsu, Energywork, and Sound Healing form the core of his work, but elements of Craniosacral Therapy, Myofascial Release, Neuromuscular Therapy, Tui Na, and Thai Massage are routinely integrated into his therapy sessions as well. Joseph has a lifelong interest in energy healing and in exploring the use of sound as a tool for personal transformation and positive change.

Joseph states, "I truly believe in the power of bodywork and energywork to transform people's lives, and to increase a person's experience of health and ease in the body. I have seen it happen again and again, and I think it should be a part of everyone's health maintenance routine. Absolutely everyone can benefit from bodywork and energywork, and from the positive effects of focused, compassionate touch."

In addition to his practice at the Eastwind Healing Center, Joseph is one of the main Instructors at the Eastwind School of Massage, where he teaches Traditional Chinese Medical Theory, Shiatsu, Reiki I and II, Sound Healing, Energy Healing, and Herbalism to the future Massage Therapists and healthcare practitioners of Iowa and points beyond.

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Cleansing



When it comes to cleansing, the usual organ of interest is the large intestine or colon. There are many comprehensive cleanse programs on the market, often effective but expensive. Manipulating the body itself can also be a great way to cleanse the colon. While there is ample benefit from receiving a professional massage with a focus on the abdomen, there is no reason not to treat yourself to assist in abdominal cleansing. We will present two methods here.

The first method (contributed by Joseph Mizelle, LMT) concentrates on the colon itself and goes like this: Lie on your back with the knees propped up slightly, which takes pressure off of the lower back and allows the abdominal musculature to relax as well. Then, making sure to move in a clockwise direction (up on the right side and down on the

left), begin to massage the abdomen using the fingertips, giving moderate pressure directly into the body. This clockwise direction is the direction of the passage of food through the large intestine and encourages normal intestinal peristalsis (the involuntary, rhythmic contractions that propel the digestate through the system). This technique is often sufficient to restore normal bowel function (in less severe cases) when performed regularly. Of course, it is important to be sensitive and sensible when applying this technique and to work always within the boundaries of your comfort and confidence. It can also be helpful to make smaller clockwise circles with the fingertips within the larger clockwise circle as it is traced across the abdomen. As with any such method, consult with your healthcare practitioner if you have any questions about the advisability of this technique's use for your particular situation.

The second method (via Jenny Wolffe, LMT) comes from the yogic tradition and is more subtle, relieving tension and clearing the nasal passages, thereby facilitating the cleansing of the entire body.

The ancient yogic breathing practice called Kapalabhati cleans and purifies the sinuses and nasal passages and the respiratory tree. It is also known to stimulate digestion and elimination, activate the solar plexus, and stimulate the nervous system. This technique is a non-caffeine, non-sugar method to increase vitality in a calm way. The calmness comes in part from the fact that the fast action of Kapalabhati causes vibrations in the cerebrospinal fluid, thus giving the brain a gentle massage. Give it a try right now if you feel like having an experience of relaxed vitality . . .

1. Get comfortable in a sitting position.
2. Do one or two minutes of abdominal breathing (belly expands in each inhalation and contracts on exhalation - giving a gentle massage to the organs - we should always breathe this way). See [newsletter number 7](#) for an article on breathing.
3. Inhale fully.
4. Expel short, forceful exhalations through the left nostril while pulling in your abdomen with each exhalation. You will experience a staccato exhalation until your lungs are fully emptied.
5. Repeat full inhalations and staccato exhalations ten times. Any inhalation that takes place should be entirely involuntary.
6. Inhale fully.
7. Exhale fully.
8. Breathe in three-quarters capacity of your lungs and hold it as long as comfortable, then exhale.
9. Repeat steps 4-8 through the right nostril.
10. Repeat steps 4-8 through both nostrils simultaneously. (If you have a history of high blood pressure, heart disease, or stroke, release the breath slowly instead of holding it. A person with epilepsy should never do rapid deep breathing.)

When you pull in your abdomen with each short exhalation, you establish a rhythm in quick succession: compress, release, compress, release, compress, release. It's like internal jogging. It gets the circulation going throughout the digestive tract and physically

stimulates the motion of the gut. Your system "wakes up" and does its job. At first, you may do only five to ten short exhalations per breath. Over a period of time you may want to do as many as a hundred.

Excerpted from *Breathe In Breathe Out* by James E Loehr, Ed. D. and Jeffrey A. Migdow, M.D.

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Cal/Mag/Vitamin D liquid



In this issue, we chose to highlight our popular Calcium/Magnesium/Vitamin D supplement. With less light coming to us from the sun during the winter (and therefore less vitamin D being synthesized by our bodies), we need to be sure that our bones stay healthy. This combination of minerals and vitamin D provide a great balance of what our bones are asking for. It's also helpful for nerve health and muscle cramping. As a liquid, it's easy to assimilate and has a spearmint taste. It contains no sugar, starch, salt, preservatives, artificial colors, flavors, or additives. It's also free from corn, wheat, yeast, soy, dairy, animal derivatives, aluminum, and sodium. This 12-ounce bottle bonanza of bone and body building blocks is only \$11 plus tax during February.

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Constipation



Constipation is a subject with many differing points of view. Its classical definition is "fewer than three bowel movements a week, with severe constipation being fewer than one movement per week." Many in the complementary medicine movement (no pun intended, so stop smirking) believe that more frequent bowel evacuations are advised, often espousing one or more per day. Western medicine seems to see no problem in evacuating the bowels once every two or three days. (But think about having six to nine meals' worth of the standard American diet sitting in your colon - that vision might just cure your constipation instantly!) Nevertheless, there are a few things both sides can agree on. Difficulty in passing stools, passing hard stools, or feeling a sense of incomplete evacuation are all symptoms of constipation.

It is important to distinguish acute (recent onset) constipation from chronic (long duration) constipation. Acute, severe constipation may require assessment because a serious medical illness may be the underlying cause (e.g., tumors of the colon). Constipation may also need investigation if it is accompanied by worrisome symptoms such as rectal bleeding, abdominal pain and cramps, nausea and vomiting, and involuntary weight loss. Chronic constipation is not seen in many Western medical sources as a problem requiring close attention, though it is worth attempts at remediation.

At times, constipation can be caused by medication (narcotics, antidepressants, anticonvulsants, or calcium channel blockers), aluminum-containing antacids, iron supplements, or the overuse of laxatives. Dehydration is another potential cause of constipation and other ills, and every effort should be made to remain adequately hydrated (and that means plain water, not soda, coffee, tea, or beer). Even a dysfunction of the pelvic floor muscles may be to blame. As you can see, constipation is a complicated and potentially many-faceted problem.

Bowel movements are under voluntary control (fortunately). Therefore, habit can play a role in remediating constipation. Keeping as regular a schedule as possible regarding time of evacuation can aid potential problems by "training" the body. Certainly, diet is important, and increasing dietary fiber via fruits and vegetables is a simple way of seeing to the problem. Fiber supplements can also assist. If bloating or gas becomes a problem with the increase in fiber, a probiotic supplement (such as acidophilus) may be helpful.

Adding herbs such as ginger to food preparation can also cut down on the incidence of bloating. Another method of treating constipation naturally is regular exercise (sedentary people are more frequently troubled by constipation).

Natural healthcare offers several avenues for dealing with constipation, from dietary changes to manual manipulation to mind/body interventions. Read on to find out more about these.

As a side note, we are not going to recommend any particular herbal preparations for constipation. Many popular herbs for constipation, such as cascara sagrada, senna, or rhubarb root, are actually purgatives which can be harmful if used repeatedly, improperly, or in large amounts. A personal consultation with a practitioner familiar with these substances is recommended before trying any purgatives.

Eastwind's nutritionist, Jessica Forbes MS, CCN, has these suggestions:

Ideally, a healthy person has one to three well-formed bowel movements daily. If you find that your bowels are moving more slowly than you would like, try one of the following nutritional remedies:

- Drink more water. Water is nature's stool softener, and staying hydrated will promote bowel health. Be especially mindful of your water intake during cold weather - the air is so dry that your body loses water faster than in warm weather. This is especially dangerous because people tend to not want to drink water when they feel cold. If this is a problem for you, try drinking hot water with a little lemon during the winter.
- Eat fiber-rich foods. Fiber adds bulk to stool and it feeds the healthy bacteria in the colon. The best sources of fiber for most people are fruits and vegetables. Whole grains also contain fiber, but if you are having colon problems it is best to stick to low-allergy, gluten-free grains such as amaranth, quinoa, millet, and oats instead of wheat.
- Take Vitamin C. Vitamin C helps to draw water into the colon, which causes a bowel movement. Start with 500 mg of vitamin C and over the course of a few days, gradually increase your dosage in increments of 500 mg until you have a healthy bowel movement.
- Get enough magnesium. Magnesium relaxes the muscles in the colon, which can alleviate constipation. Magnesium is found in green leafy vegetables and whole grains. If you are constipated, you may want to include more of these foods and also try a magnesium supplement such as magnesium glycinate or magnesium citrate. A dosage of 200-500 mg per day is usually enough to alleviate constipation.
- Try digestive enzymes. For some people, constipation is caused difficulty digesting food properly. If you experience bloating or discomfort after meals that is related to constipation, you may want to try taking a digestive enzyme supplement with meals.

- Try a salt water flush. Prior to going to bed, drink a large glass (12-16 ounces) of lukewarm water with 1 teaspoon of sea salt dissolved in it. The saltiness of the water acts as a laxative and should promote a bowel movement the next morning. Do not try this if you have high blood pressure, kidney problems, or other sensitivities to salt.
- As a last resort, try herbal laxatives (see statment above regarding herbal laxatives). Herbal laxatives such as senna or turkey rhubarb stimulate the muscles in the colon. They are good for a short-term resolution to constipation but should not be taken regularly as they may cause dependency.

A deep abdominal massage can do wonders for constipation, as well as keep the organs working well. Here's a do-it-yourself technique from yoga, called Bhunaman Vajrasana, contributed by Jenny Wolffe, LMT and yoga teacher.



Technique:

- Kneel with your knees and feet together and buttocks resting on your heels.
- Fold your arms in front of you and grasp both elbows. Press the right elbow against your abdomen on the right side beneath the rib cage.
- Exhale and bend forward from your hips, resting your upper torso across your thighs and your forehead on the floor.
- Breathe normally while you relax and allow your breath to be long and deep. Keep your shoulders relaxed so that your arms may sink deep into your abdomen.
- Return to an upright position on an inhale.
- Reverse the position of your arms (now, left arm pressed against abdomen) and repeat the process.

Benefits:

- Gives a deep massage to your abdominal organs and muscles.
- Through the deep massage, beginning with the right elbow pressing into the abdomen, stimulates and balances digestion and peristalsis.

Helpful Hints and Precautions:

It is best not to do this position on a full stomach. If your flexibility does not allow you to kneel comfortably with your buttocks on your heels, place a pillow between your

buttocks and your feet. This will allow you to relax fully into the deep abdominal massage. As with any such method, consult with your healthcare practitioner if you have any questions about the advisability of this technique's use for your particular situation.

Dr. Betsy Rippenrot, one of Eastwind's psychologists, has these thoughts about possible mind/body interactions in constipation:

Thinking about constipation from a mind/body perspective can help you understand a deeper and perhaps longer lasting pattern that may be operating in your life. The mind/body theory suggests that an inability to talk about emotions or feelings that you feel intensely will get transformed into a symbolic language of symptoms and eventually physical illness in the body. It is believed that our bowels have to do with unexpressed emotions about a relationship. Literally, when you are constipated, you are unable to expunge the toxins your body has produced. Thus, what old issues are you unable to let go of? What things are you still clinging to that need to be released? Are you clinging to the past with an unwillingness to move forward? This could be at the "root" of your constipation. A good mantra suggested by Louise Hay in "You Can Heal Your Life" to rid constipation is "As I release the past, the new and fresh and vital enter. I allow life to flow through me." Remember, our minds are extremely powerful. Use your mind to help rid yourself of this uncomfortable condition.

* * * * *

Finally, consider the humble toilet. There are colon aficionados who feel that the sit-down toilet has been the bane (one of them, anyway) of Western civilization. They believe that the best toilet, based on the design of the human body, is the Asian or Indian toilet, which requires one to squat for waste evacuation. This toilet is basically a porcelain hole set into the floor. This view holds that human beings are meant to evacuate waste in the squatting position, as Nature intended. In the sitting position, it is physically impossible for one to evacuate easily or completely.

Sit-down toilets came into prominence in the 19th century when it was adopted in England, before spreading to other Western countries. Really a cultural issue, the sitting toilet was an effect of the increasing class and racial stratification of Victorian England. The porcelain throne was justified by the idea that sitting was more dignified than squatting, which was the "habit" of natives in the English colonies. Sitting on this "throne" was seen to be more dignified, and hence more suited for aristocrats. (As an historical side-note, Queen Victoria's potty was gold plated.)

So, if chronic, severe constipation is an issue, it may be necessary to get to the "seat" of the problem. In fact, some people have taken to squatting on their conventional toilet seats. There are two obvious disadvantages to this solution: First, it is a precarious position, and one can fall off the seat; and second, it's a lot tougher to dawdle about reading the paper for extended periods while squatting (and balancing). (A solution exists, though. A search of the internet reveals that there are special platforms that can be bought to convert a sitting toilet into a squatting one, for anyone interested)

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See you next month. Stay warm!

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