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LIFESTYLE

MOM SOUQ MOMPREENEUR MARKET is hosting a Kid's Room at Dubai Ladies Club, Jumeirah today and tomorrow, with lots of fun activities for kids. E-mail market@momsouq.com for more information.

Meditate your way to health

Can behavioural training empower us to regulate immune system?

THE POWER OF meditation may be much more than what is generally thought as researchers have now found that with behavioural training like breathing exercises people can learn to modulate their immune system.

The nervous system may exert influence on immune responses, the study indicated.

The research was inspired by the extraordinary feats of Dutch celebrity daredevil Wim Hof who has endured lengthy ice-water baths, hiked to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro in shorts and made his mark in Guinness World Records with his ability to withstand cold.

When exposed to inflammation test, participants who underwent training by Hof (which included swimming in frigid water and lying bare-chested in the snow, as well as breathing and meditation exercises) reported fewer flu-like symptoms than those who did not.

Trained recruits also produced lower amounts of several proteins associated with inflammation, and higher



levels of an inflammation-fighting protein called interleukin-10.

The findings have raised hopes for patients who have chronic inflammatory

disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease, Nature reported.

The results are only preliminary, warned Matthijs

Kox, a researcher at Radboud University Medical Center in the Netherlands. The study appeared in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. *IAN S*

Caffeine fix

Sip coffee daily to prevent eye damage

YOUR DAILY CUP of coffee is brewing some soothing news for your eyes.

According to food scientists, a daily cup of coffee can prevent eyesight deterioration and possible blindness from retinal degeneration due to glaucoma, aging and diabetes.

"Raw coffee is, on average, just one per cent caffeine but it contains seven to nine per cent chlorogenic acid - a strong antioxidant that prevents retinal degeneration in mice," said Chang Y Lee, a professor of food science at Cornell University.

Coffee is the most popular drink in the world, and we understand what benefit we can get from that, he added. The retina is a thin tissue layer on the inside, back wall of the eye with millions of light-

sensitive cells and other nerve cells that receive and organise visual information. It is also one of the most metabolically active tissues, demanding high levels of oxygen and making it prone to oxidative stress. The lack of oxygen and production of free radicals leads to tissue damage and loss of sight.

The study is "important in understanding functional foods, that is, natural foods that provide beneficial health effects", Lee noted. Previous studies have shown that coffee also cuts the risk of such chronic diseases as Parkinson's, prostate cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and age-related cognitive declines.

The study has been published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. *IAN S*



ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Stone therapy

There is a sudden interest in new age concepts globally. Many people are now turning to alternate ways of treating many diseases. Modalities such as reiki and meditation are gaining popularity as new dimensions of consciousness are accessed. Doctors are looking at the mind-body-spirit connection when treating patients and traditional medicines are once again trendy. The main focus is on how to remain stress-free the holistic way. The spread of yoga across the world has also been very rapid over the last few years.

Many people are learning more about the ancient knowledge of chakra system. There is a lot of information available about how to energise and balance all seven chakras. However using stones and colours to balance chakras is one of the most effective techniques.

Every chakra has a specific stone that can be used to enhance the energising process during practising meditation or reiki. Placing specific coloured crystals or stones on your physical body on the corresponding chakras during a session, helps in balancing, energising and restoring energy in the chakras.

For the root chakra, crystals such as ruby, garnet or hermatite can be used. The vibrant red colour helps in activating and restoring energy in this chakra. The sacral or the second chakra can be activated through stones such as topaz and citrine to stabilise emotions and boost self-confidence. For the naval chakra, the recommended stone is tigers eye. This stone helps in boosting the intelligence and memory. Heart chakra can be balanced through use of jade and rose quartz. As this chakra is the seat of forgiveness and compassion, these stones help in calming the energy and embracing life. Using blue topaz can help in improving communication and enhancing creativity for throat chakra. The third eye chakra needs a lot of balancing as it represents the mind and will power. Therefore amethyst can be used to enhance colour and improve the function of the chakra. The last chakra, which is known as crown chakra can be restored with use of a diamond, clear quartz or amethyst.

Once the crystals or the stones are used on a regular basis, the effects can be felt and you will start to feel energised. It is recommended that you wash the crystals or the stones with salt water to get rid of all the heavy energy that has been absorbed from your chakras.

The mind-body-spirit connection can be enhanced further by practicing chakra meditations along with stone therapy.

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