

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 0:05

This episode of health bite is sponsored by Dell nutrition, a line of functional nutrition bars and supplements. You can find out more at [Dell nutrition calm](http://Dellnutrition.com). Hi, and welcome to health bite. I'm your host Dr. Adrienne. I'm a big believer that we can all make big changes in our health and well being with small actionable steps small bites towards better health. Every week I interview a guest that will share their spin on what steps we can take to live well. As always, I'm grateful to have you here. And let's dive into this week's episode.

In this episode of health bite I spoke with Dr. Tami Singh, board certified in family medicine, functional medicine and founder of Aspire health, a medical practice that incorporates yoga, Reiki and other integrative practices. Dr. Tammy and I discussed how she came to practice integrative medicine, why she feels we all benefit from them, and how she uses these practices to heal her patients. Mind Body and Soul. Okay, well, welcome back to health bite, and I am so happy to be here with Dr. Tami Singh. Welcome.

Dr. Tami Singh 1:11

Thank you. Thank you for having me on your show. I appreciate it.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 1:15

Oh, it's a pleasure. You have such a varied background as a family medicine physician, but also board certified in functional medicine as well as a yoga instructor and a Reiki healer, and are incorporating all of this into your medical practice. I'm interested, how did you get started in these alternative practices.

Dr. Tami Singh 1:38

So just an Indian background in general, I was always intrigued by doing more holistic natural things rather than, you know, even though I am an MD trained and went into medicine always looked for some alternative to food or supplements. But then, you know, about maybe 15 years ago, I was introduced to yoga and really fell in love with it, and incorporated in my lifestyle. And then when I was about to open up my practice, I really wanted to be able to teach my patients and let them understand the benefits of yoga. And not you know that there's a cookie cutter model that you know, you had to fit a certain stereotype to do any yoga. So I've done yoga with children, I've done chair yoga with some of my seniors. And you know, I really like to educate patients on just different Asana positions, and even just like pranayama breath and how important it is to our body, and just keeping our body healthy and relieving stress from everyday, you know, activities that we're dealing with.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 2:39

So for those of us who don't know, the pranayama breaths, can you explain a little bit about what that means?

Dr. Tami Singh 2:46

Yeah, so pranayama breath is just some deep breathing and prana, you know, means energy. It's part of like Reiki as well. Reiki means energy, chi means energy. So it's just deep breathing through the nose, and it's exhaling, and you can actually figure out if you're more, you know, the ying and yang if you're more female dominated or male dominated. So it's a very good deep breathing exercise that you can kind of incorporate into your life on a daily aspect.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 3:13

And we know that breathing practices have so many tangible, immediate benefits, right. So I mean, it's such a great way to rev down the sympathetic nervous system. And so talk about that a little bit and how you relate that to stress, as he said, mitigating stress as well.

Dr. Tami Singh 3:32

Yeah, so I recommend my patients and every session that I have, with my patients, it's usually about an hour to two hour long session. And I really kind of get a really good background of their everyday lifestyle, and try to understand where their stresses are coming from. So when they're able to incorporate meditation and incorporate breathing exercises, so we have the flight and fight sympathetic parasympathetic response. And so unfortunately, our body is very quick to react in stressful situations. And so we're kind of on the fight, fight, fight, go go go mode. So it really helps us. You know, when we encounter or encounter these experiences in everyday life, it helps us how to handle it maybe a little bit better than that fight mode, constantly. Breathing is incorporated in yoga, but a little bit different than yoga. So how do you incorporate these things? How do you teach people to incorporate it into their day to day, so I asked them, you know, to maybe do a one minute meditation, you don't have to do it very long. And I asked them to maybe set a timer on their phone in regards to reminders when to do this, and schedule it in to our daily activity, or maybe right before they're ready to eat a meal, tried to take a few breaths, try to meditate. And again, different people may be attracted to different meditation techniques. So you know, we have guided meditation, we have silent meditation, you know, we have moving meditation, there's all these different techniques that you can do. It's just what fits for you. So I always like to tell them

You know, we're all individuals, really just you know what makes sense for me may not fit for somebody else. So just we have to learn our body, get adapted to our body and understand what our body needs and wants and is going to benefit it.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 5:14

I like that you mentioned the meditation before meals and the fact that we can incorporate this at different times of the day, certainly for mealtime, it helps with mindfulness around food and recognizing whether or not we are truly hungry. One thing we're all experiencing

now many of us who are working from home or telemedicine in from home is that we're close to our pantries and also bored because there's no variability in our day and in our scenery. It's a great point. And then also before sleep is another one because insomnia definitely has skyrocketed right now. And meditation before bed is also a great strategy to help facilitate sleep.

Yes, exactly 100% agree on that.

I'm curious, how do you personally incorporate yoga into your day? And what do you seek to benefit from using it? Yeah, so

Dr. Tami Singh 6:09

I usually start my day, around five o'clock in the morning, I like to get up really early, and just kind of set a pattern for how my day is going to begin, I don't like to wake up as soon as the alarm strikes and go, go go. So I tried to at that moment, go for a little jog, do a little 20 minute HIT workout, and then I incorporate my yoga at that point, and meditation. So I kind of tried to do all of that before the day gets started. Because I've always felt that when the day gets started, and if I say I'm going to do it in the evening, something always happens. So if I could make that time for myself in the morning, I do and it just it sets its tone for my day. Unfortunately, in my last practice, I would see 3040 patients a day I had blasting techno music in my office, and I had five examining rooms and five medical assistants LPN, that would room my patients, and it was just like, go, go, go, go, go. And in my practice, now I'm able to set the tone in the morning at five. And it's kind of the same tone. as the day progresses, I get to spend, again, like I said, an hour to two hours with my patients, and just really take my time, really just have a very pleasant day and enjoy it. And at the end of the day, I'm not feeling overworked, overburdened, you know, stacks of charts, I get to, again, like I said, set the tone with that yoga session in the morning.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 7:28

I love that. I think I also like to do my exercise and my practices in the morning. And I totally believe in setting the tone. And I also think it's really important for routine and ritual. Because to your point when we let it go, we're much more likely to negotiate ourselves out of the activity.

Dr. Tami Singh 7:50

Yeah, exactly.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 7:51

You also mentioned that you incorporate Reiki and there's an interesting way that you got introduced to Reiki but first before you tell us that explain what that even is, what is Reiki?

Dr. Tami Singh 8:05

So Reiki is based on energy healing, they like to call it or hands healing. So Reiki is from a Japanese word, meaning love, believe it or not, and it's all about energy healing. So when I found out about Reiki from my yoga instructor, she started explaining it to me. And she mentioned that, you know, big institutions like Cleveland Clinic and Harvard, were having these, you know, integrative medicine centers that were utilizing Reiki in patients before surgery, during pregnancy, after childbirth. And these are all just ways of additional healing. And so when they incorporated, you know, deep breath work along with Reiki, their healing, just skyrocketed, and there, it's used in, you know, cancer patients. So again, it's energy healing, and we have seven chakras. And so the focus is on these different shoppers that could be blocked, that could not be allowing the energy to flow to through our bodies, like it should naturally flow. And as a Reiki healer, we're used as kind of like a channel to kind of let the energy flow, it's not going to unblock or block those areas. It's just going to help with traveling the energy and hoping that we can figure out where may need a little bit more focus.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 9:29

explain a little bit about the chakras tell us a little more.

Dr. Tami Singh 9:33

So there's seven chakras and we go from starting from the bottom which is our root chakra. Okay, so our root soccer is mostly for like stability, security, and then we go from there, our legs into our peronism which is our base or our spine and that's also for grounding as well with with our root chakra. So that's really important. Our root chakra and then our peronism, which is our Sacral Chakra. The pelvic area pelvic area Yeah, apparently, um, and then we go on to our solar plexus, which is our spinal cord. And it's right between the navel and the sacred. And that's more free motions. And then we go up a little bit more past our diaphragm into our heart, which is our heart chakra, which obviously is love. And then we go into our throat, which is communication. And then we go into our third eye, which is gut intuition.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 10:27

And so these are practices that, as you mentioned, Reiki comes from a Japanese word has been around since the late 1800s. Right, tell us a little bit about how it's been incorporated, because it is relatively new and alternative right to the west, but very much utilized in other parts of the world.

Dr. Tami Singh 10:49

Yeah, and there's a Japanese doctor, his name is Dr. Yu Tsai, if I'm saying that correct? Probably not. But he just took in all these different religions, you know, from Christianity, to Hinduism, to Judaism, to Buddhism, to all these different religions that he took

were in these different religions, they used hands as healing. And you know, so it was kind of incorporating all these things as a healing force, which has been around for years and years. So he was just, you know, one that came up with this with Reiki and the love of it with hands healings.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 11:25

Can you explain practically speaking, because it feels still very, you know, energy work, practically speaking, how do you execute this? How do you do it?

Dr. Tami Singh 11:35

Exactly. So there's a massage table in my office, okay, in a room. And it's really important as Reiki healer to become prepared for a session. So that's where prana not Yama breath is really important for myself to do that before my session to kind of get things flowing, making sure I'm ready to properly do a Reiki session. Because if you're not emotionally and physically ready for that session, it's not going to be successful for the client. So the client also needs to have good intentions and willingness and being open to this. So they lay on a massage table. And I have a little ritual before I get started with my pranayama breath, and just kind of asking the universe for me to be a channel of energy for healing of my clients. And so I do my little ritual before, and then I come in, and I do a sweep of their energy, kind of opening it up opening up that channel over their body, and they're just resting, sometimes I use some essential oils, it's in a nice dark room, I have some music playing in the background. And so just kind of get them into that mood that he could either could be laying face down or on their bath dependent if they have any pain that we may want to focus on on their back, we may want to start them face down. And then I go over their different chakras. And I kind of just hover my hands over it just very, you know, if this was their crown of their head, I'm just kind of like over it like this. And then I go over their third eye and over their neck. And I was mentioning before that, uh, you could actually do these videos on YouTube. There's some really great Reiki masters that have YouTube videos that you can walk through doing it on yourself.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 13:25

Amazing. I know, it's interesting, because from a Western medical perspective, right, you hear the word universe and kind of, you know, sends off alarms in your head and you have visions, or I have visions of like crystals and woowoo. But I think it's important to note that a lot of these practices focus on things that have been validated in scientific medicine, right. So we spoke earlier about breathing techniques and how we know that it does within a few breaths, help reduce the heart rate and dilate blood vessels and reduce kind of sympathetic or fight and flight drive right to bring about a more parasympathetic or a sense of ease. The same with, you know what you said about intention about coming in with the right intention. When

you said that it made me think of mindset. And there's so much data around mindset, right? I think I've brought this up maybe in a previous podcast, but it's interesting. They've even shown studies where labor's if they have the mindset that their work is physical activity or exercise. They have greater reductions in waist circumference and blood pressure from that very same work that they were previously doing, just from his shift in mindset. So it's incredible, really, how powerful these practices can be in practicality in helping augment, you know, antihypertensives are blood pressure medication, you can actually bring about your own body's willingness, you know, for lack of a better word to heal and to repair things, like I mentioned. Right?

Dr. Tami Singh 15:14

Yes, agree 100% with a mindset, you know, and just kind of being on a positive mindset. So one of the things I recommend my patients, you know, is to do gratitude journals, you know, I even do it in part of my routine every morning is to write a few things, or if I don't do that morning, in the evening, write a few things I'm grateful for, and be appreciative of it. Because being, you know, gratitude journals, also saying some affirmations that are positive notes. These are all things again, with the mindfulness that you were talking about making sure you're on a positive mindset, which kind of brings positivity in your life,

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 15:49

you are incorporating these things into your regular medical practice?

Dr. Tami Singh 15:55

Yes, yeah. So it's great that I'm able to do this, whereas unfortunately, my last practice, I didn't have that time, because I was in that traditional model. So in this practice, you know, after every visit with my patients, I actually, I send them an email of everything we discussed. And I kind of write down and jot down like little pointers that I want them to focus on. And so you know, I want them to make sure they're sleeping well, at least seven, eight hours, I want to make sure they're getting enough water, they're eating nutritious food, at least getting at least, you know, maybe six to seven vegetables servings a day, I want them to do gratitude journals, I want them to breathe and do some breathing exercises. So again, everybody can benefit from all these things, I always tell them that, you know, we need a good foundation. And when we stopped doing these basic things, we start getting cracks in our foundation. And then we have these weeds that transpire. And the weeds are disease processes, you know, pre diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, those types of things. So it's things that we could, you know, avoid having?

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 17:00

Yeah, I mean, certainly there are genetic factors at play, but then we have to lifestyle really is evidence based in terms of prevention. Can

you speak a little bit about supplements are an area in functional medicine, which you're certified in that are recommended? Talk a little bit about different supplements, and I know it's very tailored to the individual, but I think some of the things that we are collectively grappling with is immunity and immune health and the other is stress reduction and kind of chronic low level anxiety that people are experiencing these days. So what are your top picks are your recommendations in terms of supplementation in those areas? Yeah,

Dr. Tami Singh 17:46

so for immunity number one is vitamin D. I see even though I live in South Florida and we get all this sun, you know vitamin D I see it every day at least you know a few handful of patients that have low vitamin D levels, so it's really important to make sure we're getting enough vitamin D in our body they've done studies where they've linked low vitamin D levels to patients who actually get COVID and end up hospitalized. So it is something to take in consideration getting your vitamin D level check you know vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamins so it could be toxic to our body if we're taking too much also. So it's really important to get that nice little you know, no amount or you know value that that is beneficial. Yeah, the range that's important. Other things are vitamin C is some antioxidants. You know, vitamin C's great glutathione, excellent for our body is an antioxidant, zinc, highly recommended as well. turmeric also inflammatory markers, you know, our body, we end up seeing lots of inflammation in our body from stress. So we really want to reduce those stress with turmeric and omega threes that can help with like reducing the inflammation in our system. curcumin is a great immune health supplement that you know, it's actually in onions, so you could get it from your food or you can take a supplement for it.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 19:07

Yeah, I think there's a lot of good stuff there. And I want to highlight the vitamin D because you're in Florida and I'm in sunny California. Yeah, but vitamin D deficiency even prior to you know, work from home and stay at home quarantine of vitamin D deficiency was very prevalent in Southern California, there was a study by Kaiser many years back that showed an incidence of over 60% of vitamin D deficiency in California or Southern California. And vitamin D deficiency is associated with reduced immunity as well as so many other things right metabolic health and depression and then these are associations but nonetheless, I also want to highlight turmeric because it is something that in America we Westerners consume as capsules and powders And I think it's great to add it into your smoothie, for example, but it is something that has been widely utilized in both of our backgrounds cultures, right in Middle Eastern and Indian culture in cooking, and has been used medicinally as well. Those are some great tips for immunity, talk a little bit about stress and stress reduction.

Dr. Tami Singh 20:23

Yeah, so including, you know, with the Reiki and the yoga and, you know, exercise and activity. Also, there's, you know, supplements that we can use to help with anxiety and stress or the reducing. So I like some cortisol type stress relievers I recommend patients to use is ashwagandha. It's a really good one. Also LC Nene can help with like anxiety, utilizing maybe some gavage or five HTP, that can help with our hormones. Unfortunately, right now, again, like you mentioned, mental health is really big with COVID, and are not interacting with others as much as we used to. So these are just some natural supplements that can be taken. And then again, you mentioned about sleep and meditating before sleep, taking some of these supplements like the elfia, Nene and gabbeh. before sleep can also help get a some restful sleep at least seven, eight hours, just because at that time, that's really important to get that quality as well as quantity of sleep for REM cycle, sleep and getting through our stages asleep.

I like ashwagandha a lot. And also in terms of thinking about ancient practices, which is kind of a theme of what we've been discussing today. ashwagandha is also highly utilized in ru Vedic medicine and is an old herbal supplement that has been shown to kind of rev down the stress response in the cortisol response. And I think cortisol is also one of those kind of triggering words, because we use it, you know, people throw it around, right. But there's actually data for ashwagandha and reducing cortisol levels, as well as mood benefits in terms of anxiety, cognitive benefits, and to your point sleep benefits to sleep. I appreciate this conversation, because I think you've brought up a lot of varying points in terms of what people can incorporate. And we don't need to do everything. We don't need to feel overwhelmed by incorporating it all. But as you mentioned earlier in the conversation, picking out those things that really resonate or trying, you know, maybe starting off with a morning ritual, or starting off with an evening meditation or a supplement. You know, there's a lot here that people can kind of pick all a cart, and incorporate Exactly. As we wrap up, what would be your kind of top pick for someone who's listening to this and maybe loves all the information provided, but yet feels a little bit overwhelmed by all the possibilities? How would you recommend either your favorites? Or how would you recommend people easing into these practices?

I would recommend, you know, after you listen to this podcast to then decide on what's your most important thing, or what kind of resonates with you the best and making a list and kind of prioritizing what's the most important at the top and choosing that first item and try to incorporate in your daily routine or ritual for that week, and just trying to master at once you master that first item, then move on to the next one. And then keep going. Yeah, I

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 23:32

like that stepwise process. And I like the idea of have a list so that

you don't feel like you have to incorporate everything right away. But it is there. It's a blueprint for what you wish to pursue. So one item for one week consistently. And maybe it'll take more than a week to be consistent with it. And that's

Dr. Tami Singh 23:53

okay. Yeah, exactly. It's okay. It's really important to just make sure that we give ourselves that benefit of the doubt that you know, maybe we don't master it in a week. You know, just be gentle with ourselves.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 24:05

Yeah, Grace, and maybe we will master it. Never, you know, but

Dr. Tami Singh 24:10

I haven't mastered meditation yet. I still struggle every time I do it.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 24:15

Yeah, that's a tough one. For sure. It is. Well, thank you so much, Dr. Tami. I really enjoyed having you. And this breadth of information was lovely. And I hope we can have you back another time to talk a little bit more about some of these practices that you've mentioned. Thanks again.

Dr. Tami Singh 24:33

Oh, thank you.

Dr. Adrienne Youdim, Host 24:34

I hope you've enjoyed this episode and are inspired to take a small bite towards your own health and wellness. If you love what you heard, please subscribe on iTunes and Spotify or anywhere else you podcast and share us. If you're looking for more info you can find lots of content and sign up for my newsletter adult nutrition calm. There, you can learn more about me and my curated line of supplements and functional protein bars.

Thank you You're listening, and I look forward to seeing you again next week.

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