

IN BALANCE – SUMMER 2007

Summer is In Full Swing!

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Balance Step: Relax

It's summer, the season of vacation and relaxation! If you are planning to spend some hours on the beach, the pool, with a picnic, summer is the perfect time "to work" on relaxing.

We know stress, whether it is physical, mental, or emotional, is a part of every day life. Fortunately, we have control mechanisms, known as the stress response, that help us adapt to everyday life stressors. But when stress is severe, out of the ordinary, or lasts too long, our ways of coping can be overwhelmed. This can result in high blood pressure, anxiety, back pain and other body aches. Did you know....too much stress can create *hormone imbalances*, which contribute to insomnia, insulin resistance, hot flashes or migraines.

Some of us, in our attempt to reduce stress acquire poor coping mechanisms to deal with the stress — smoking, alcohol, drugs, **over reliance on sleep medications**, overeating, and emotional outbursts – which overtime can be the only way we know to deal with stress.

Learning to manage and reduce stress in a more natural healthy way will ultimately effect every area of our lives – work, how we relate to our family and friends, our health, and success in life.

Learning to reduce stress and relax IS ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT BALANCE STEP. Reducing stress requires learning some new things, practice, and our commitment to make different choices. For some, you may need to get professional assistance.

What to do

There are a variety of ways to reduce stress and relax. What works for you, may not for another. You probably already know what relaxes you. Think about those things

that bring you calm and peace. Doesn't just thinking about it relax you? Take the time to calm yourself, everyday, even for JUST ONE minute. A minute can grow to many minutes. It all counts. Here are some ideas to consider:

- Balance work and play; do things that are fun;
- Take a deep breath, practice breathing exercises;
- Find a minute or more to meditate, pray, or do some progressive relaxation techniques with your body;
- Listen to the music you love;
- Laugh regularly;
- Read a good book;
- Eat slowly;
- Regularly exercise, incorporate some slower exercises that focus your mind and body like stretching and yoga;
- Garden;
- Spend time in nature - take in the beauty of your surroundings- listen, smell, look, touch, feel;
- Address issues with job, friends, family and self;
- Reduce stimulants and sedatives; and
- Have times where you schedule nothing.

"Did you know you can balance your hormones by hanging out with your friends?" or "Oxytocin the friendship hormone."

We love this article. Why, because it shows that everything is interconnected – including our hormones, read on.....

Ever wonder why after a brain-meltingly stressful day, you find yourself calling up your girlfriend and meeting over a bottle of wine or a few clothing racks? According to a study at UCLA, it may not be the retail therapy or the gab fest over wine, but your friends themselves that discharges that tension. Researchers have discovered that spending time with friends releases the “tend and gather” hormone, oxytocin, in women. Rather than resorting to “fight or flight” instincts, stress triggers women’s tendency to gather with friends and tend to children. In fact, spending quality time with friends may not only make you healthier, reducing your risk of disease by lowering blood pressure, heart rate, and cholesterol, but it also may help you live longer!

UCLA STUDY ON FRIENDSHIP AMONG WOMEN

By Gale Berkowitz

A landmark UCLA study suggests friendships between women are special. They shape who we are and who we are yet to be. They soothe our tumultuous inner world, fill the emotional gaps in our marriage, and help us remember who we really are. By the way, they may do even more. Scientists now suspect that hanging out with our friends can actually counteract the kind of stomach-quivering stress most of us experience on a daily basis. A

landmark UCLA study suggests that women respond to stress with a cascade of brain chemicals that cause us to make and maintain friendships with other women. It's a stunning find that has turned five decades of stress research--- most of it on men---upside down. **Read the rest of the article --->**
<http://www.womeninbalance.org/pdf/Friendship.pdf>

Women in Balance's Dr. Jane Murray, M.D. Gives Testimony Before U.S. Senate on Bioidentical Hormones

The U.S. Senate Committee on Aging held a hearing on April 19, 2007, entitled "Bioidentical Hormones: Sound Science or Bad Medicine?" chaired by Senator Gordon Smith (R, Oregon). Prompted by the growing debate over the use of bioidentical hormones as an alternative to conventional hormone therapy, the hearing was convened not, as Senator Smith clearly stated in his opening remarks, to endorse one type of hormone therapy over another but to discover if "the federal government is providing the information and oversight necessary, so that consumers, women specifically, are able to make safe and well informed decisions about their individual healthcare needs." Additionally, the committee hoped to discover whether it would be necessary for the federal government to study the safety and efficacy of bioidentical hormone products. Senator Smith has already commissioned the Congressional Research Service to conduct a 50 state study to help determine the way forward regarding the proper role of the federal government, the state government and the industry in regulating pharmacy compounding. Testimony was representative of interested parties in the issue including Jacques Rossouw, NIH researcher and head of the Women's Health Initiative study ended in 2002. Women in Balance submitted testimony to the Committee from chair of the board, Dr. Jane Murray, M.D. **Read her testimony here →**
<http://www.womeninbalance.org/pdf/Testimony.pdf>

We've Updated Our Research Section!

Research never rests and neither do we here at Women in Balance. Our research section has been carefully updated by our Science Advisory Board to represent the latest information on bioidentical hormone research. **Check out our Research Section** <http://www.womeninbalance.org/research/index.html>

How NIH Misread Hormone Study in 2002, WSJ, July 9, 2007

This article, published on the five year anniversary of federal government health officials announcing that they had halted a major study of menopause hormones, saying the drugs saying the drugs increased a woman's risk of heart attack by 29%, tells the story of the confusion and controversies that arose (and still remain) from the way a small group chose to "interpret" the Women's Health Initiative (WHI)

data. Jacques Rossouw, lead physician who has overseen the WHI since its inception, defends the government's handling of the study results "based on what we knew at the time," and says that study officials wanted to make a dramatic statement. "Our main job at the time was to turn around the prevailing notion that hormones would be useful for long-term prevention of heart disease," he says. "That was our objective. That was a worthy objective which we achieved." We wonder whose "worthy" objective was served. We don't think women were served, nor science, as the way in which the data was "interpreted" did not include other key findings that refute their interpretations, nor make a crucial distinction between the hormones that were studied and those that were not. In their "interpretation," they chose to generalize the study to all hormones. We know now this is NOT THE TRUTH and that bioidentical estrogens and progesterone have some quite different effects from the non-bio-identical hormones used in the WHI study. **Read the Article** --->

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB118394176612760522.html?mod=todays_us_marketplace

Indulge in a Little Online Retail Therapy and Help Women in Balance

No doubt, you already buy all kinds of stuff online from gifts to airline tickets. Now the simple act of shopping can do more...and you can help us educate women across the country about how to balance their hormones, prevent disease, and regain optimal health. Women in Balance is a partner with Benevolink, an innovative program that gives you an easy way to support our efforts in bringing hormone balance to thousands of women year round without taking extra money out of your pocket.

Here's how it works. Sign up for Benevolink at www.benevolink.com, and choose Women in Balance as your charity. Then, when you surf the internet to buy that pair of shoes you absolutely "must" have, log onto Benevolink and go to The Marketplace@Benevolink. Find the link for your favorite store and shop! When you make a purchase, Benevolink will record a small percentage of that amount into your account as "earned dollars" (but they don't charge you anything). Any funds you "earn" through shopping become real dollars donated by corporate sponsors which you can donate to Women in Balance. How easy is that? To find out more and join Benevolink <http://www.benevolink.com>

Women's International, Inc. Helping You in Your Journey to Wellness

Women in Balance is proud to welcome our newest Founding Corporate Partner, **Women's International Pharmacy, Inc.** to our national campaign, **Create Balance: Your Journey to Wellness.** Women's International Pharmacy is dedicated to helping women achieve hormone balance, and to be active participants in managing their healthcare. They provide educational information, as well as consultations with pharmacists, all of which help women make informed decisions regarding hormone therapies that ultimately affect their quality of life. Learn more about Women's International, Inc. <http://www.womensinternational.com>

Novel Perspectives for Progesterone in Hormone Replacement Therapy, with Special Reference to the Nervous System

Endocrine Review, Jun 2007; 28: 387 - 439. In this review, Michael Schumacher et.al. presents a sound case for re-thinking the clinical effects of progestagens beyond the traditional practice of progestin use for endometrial protection only. This paper highlights the controversial reputation of progestagens as a single class by clarifying the very distinct differences between natural progesterone and progestins. Summary of large postmenopausal HRT study trials, along with a comprehensive look at progesterone metabolism pathways compels new regard for progesterone as a therapeutic agent. Salient points regarding the neuroprotective and promyelinating effects of progesterone will pique much interest for the possibility of preventing and/or reversing age-dependent changes and dysfunctions. Schumacher et.al. provide an intriguing platform for the re-evaluation of hormonal aging overall.

More ---> <http://www.womeninbalance.org/pdf/NovelPerspectives.pdf>