Natural Ways to Reverse and Prevent Hypertension

Edited by Mark V. Wiley, Ph.D., OMD
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Dr. Mark Wiley, Self-Directed Wellness Expert

Mark V. Wiley is an internationally renowned mind-body health practitioner, author, motivational speaker and teacher. He has traveled extensively throughout the United States, Europe, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Japan to research and master the world’s alternative healing practices; from the oldest to the most modern.

Dr. Mark’s interest in alternative health practices was not just a mere curiosity; he was looking for long-lasting relief from the debilitating migraines and chronic pain that plagued him for most of his life. He received treatments from chiropractors, physical therapists, hypnotists, acupuncturists, herbalists, bone-setters, qigong masters, yoga masters, traditional Chinese doctors, faith healers and tribal shamans.

Dr. Mark is the founder of The Wiley Method—a revolutionary new way of diagnosing and removing—not “treating”—physical ailments, such as migraines, back pain, arthritis and other chronic pain, as well as hypertension, obesity, skin conditions, fatigue and other health concerns. His Integrated Mind-Body Approach synthesizes years of
research and first-hand experience and focuses on balancing the body—returning it to homeostasis—thereby providing recovery, balance and prevention of the ailments. This happens because the environment that allows the ailment or disease to exist is no longer present. This is the treatment that Mark used to cure his own migraines and chronic pain and this is the method that he uses to cure his clients.

The past decade has seen him interviewed for print and radio in the U.S., UK and Philippines, lecturing at Penn State University, presenting at University of Pennsylvania, and teaching at The Chinese Medicine Academy in London.

Mark has written nine books and more than 400 magazine and online articles. His TV show, “10-Minute Cures,” is currently in development. From 2003–2007 he was Managing Director at Integrated Energy Medicine, LLC in Philadelphia. Today he serves on the Health Advisory Boards of several health and fitness institutes and associations while focusing his attention on writing and helping people worldwide achieve healthy, balanced lives.
Introduction

Hypertension, or high blood pressure (HBP), is one of the most prevalent health issues that affect a person’s quality of life and longevity. The statistics offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), paint a scary picture: 32 percent of non-institutionalized adults ages 20 and over have hypertension; 40.5 million Americans had ambulatory care visits (to physician offices, hospital outpatient and emergency departments) with hypertension as primary diagnosis; and 53 percent of all nursing home residents have hypertension.

When blood pressure is high undue pressure is placed on artery walls. This forces the heart to pump harder than normal in order to circulate blood throughout the body. Undiagnosed and/or untreated high blood pressure can put you at risk of heart attack, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and other potentially life-threatening diseases.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the cause of high blood pressure is unknown in 85 percent to 95 percent of those who have it.¹ This is because high blood pressure has a genetic component as well as a number of external causes. Most people are unknowingly perpetuating multiple causes of their hypertension without even knowing it. The risk factors outlined in this book will give you clear insight into
what you might be doing to cause your blood pressure to be in a constant raised level.

High blood pressure is easily diagnosed by using a blood pressure cuff and stethoscope. Your primary care physician can give you the most accurate reading, but the machines found in many pharmacies that you insert your arm into to get a blood pressure reading can give you a general idea of your blood pressure condition. Regardless of whether you already suffer from hypertension or not, prevention is the best defense. Happily, the means of reversing hypertension and the means of preventing it are one and the same: That is, understanding its cause and adopting the necessary and simple, broad-stroke lifestyle changes.

While prescription drug therapy can quickly reduce your blood pressure, it does not address the root causes of why you are experiencing it in the first place. As such, if you follow this therapy and make no other changes, you will forever have to rely on these drugs for relief. Once you stop taking the pharma drugs, your blood pressure will again rise… unless you personally take hold of your situation and make the necessary lifestyle changes required to reverse and prevent this potentially life-threatening condition.

This book, *Natural Ways to Reverse and Prevent Hypertension*, offers real strategies you can embrace to eradicate the ill-effects of continuous high blood pressure from your life. It offers a clear-cut and comprehensive approach steeped in natural supplementation, dietary changes, stress reduction techniques, safe exercises and simple mind-body practices like yoga and meditation.
Taken as a whole, the program is really a case for altering one’s lifestyle and making healthy choices that keep blood pressure within normal ranges.

Yours in Optimal Health,

Mark V. Wiley, Ph.D., OMD
Natural Ways to Reverse and Prevent Hypertension
CHAPTER 1

Understanding Hypertension and Its Risk Factors

Blood pressure is a measurement reading of the amount of force the heart generates while pumping blood through the arteries. There are two numbers involved in the reading of blood pressure: Systolic and diastolic. The first number is systolic and it represents the amount of force expended by the heart as it fills the blood vessels. Diastolic pressure, on the other hand, is a numeric quantification of the resistance to that force. When taken together, the systolic and diastolic numbers provide an indication of how successful your heart is at getting the blood to the tissues in your body.

Hypertension Defined

Hypertension, or high blood pressure (HBP), is indicated when the two number pressure reading consistently displays over 140/90 mm/Hg (milligrams of mercury). As a baseline indicator, 120/80 is considered to be a normal blood pressure reading. Hypertension, therefore, is unhealthy and stresses the flow of blood to important organs, such as the brain, heart and kidneys. When left untreated, hypertension leaves the body in an excessive state of undue stress and this can cause stroke, heart attack, arterial aneurysm, hardening of the arteries and kidney failure. All of these conditions are potentially life threatening.
There are two types of hypertension to be aware of. When no specific cause of contracting this health issue is identified, it is known as essential hypertension. However, hypertension that is caused by a pre-existing health condition (e.g., stress, adrenal gland tumor, arteriosclerosis, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease), the side effect of medication (e.g., birth control pills, some cold remedies, corticosteroids, migraine meds), or from poor lifestyle choices (e.g., alcohol abuse, high salt intake) is termed secondary hypertension.

The Elusive Signs and Symptoms

The scariest thing about hypertension is that it can kill without showing specific signs of being present. That is, there are no signs and symptoms of poor health that are specific to the identification of hypertension. You see, while its symptoms include headache, blurry vision and dizziness, these are not specific to high blood pressure and can be present for any number of related or unrelated reasons. This is why hypertension has been labeled “the silent killer.”

As a result of its lack of specific symptoms, hypertension is often detected too late—that is, when one’s blood pressure is far above healthy limits and within potentially lethal range. When blood pressure is in this range, some combination of the following symptoms will be present: Severe headache, fatigue or confusion, chest pain, difficulty breathing, irregular heartbeat, blood in the urine and pounding in your chest, neck or ears.²

If you are experiencing any of the above-mentioned symptoms, see your physician immediately. It’s possible that you may be experiencing what is known as a
“hypertensive crisis.” If this is the case, it can lead to stroke or heart attack and can result in heart, brain and kidney damage.\(^3\)

**Risk Factors Associated with Hypertension**

Hypertension is difficult to diagnose without actually taking your blood pressure on a regular basis. What’s more, it does not discriminate in who it affects. Therefore, getting a handle on early warning signs by knowing the risk factors and your relationship with them, is a big step toward prevention. Below are lists of risk factors by category. By knowing what your individual risks are you can keep an eye on things and take the necessary steps to reverse or prevent hypertension, thereby reducing your chances of experiencing hypertension-related heart attack, heart disease or stroke.

**GENETICS**—High blood pressure has a genetic component, so people whose parents, siblings or close relatives have (or have had) hypertension are at increased risk of developing it.

**ETHNICITY**—African-Americans and Native-Americans are more likely candidates to develop hypertension than are Caucasian-Americans and Mexican-Americans. They also are predisposed to developing it earlier in life.\(^4\)

**GENDER**—Men are also more likely to develop hypertension at an earlier age than women. In fact, high blood pressure affects significantly more men under age 45 than women in the same age group. Beginning at age 65, women are at higher risk than men for developing high blood pressure because their blood vessels become less flexible.
Even with the above-mentioned areas where we have little control, lifestyle choices play a major role in the development of hypertension over the course of one’s life. And this we do have control over. This means that we have the ability, through our actions and choices, to cause, reverse and prevent this potentially life-threatening condition. Here’s what you need to know:

**POOR HEALTH**—The onset of secondary hypertension can be caused by other ill-health conditions such as those associated with the kidneys, adrenals and arteries. And diseases affecting these are often caused by poor diet, lack of exercise and stress. In other words, they are preventable and thus self-induced by poor lifestyle choices.

**EXCESS WEIGHT**—Obese and overweight people are at high risk of hypertension. It has repeatedly been shown that losing weight can lower your blood pressure by about 5 mm/Hg per 10 pounds of weight loss. People who have a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or greater are more likely to have high blood pressure than people who weigh less. Here is a website where you can calculate your BMI: [http://www.bmi-calculator.net](http://www.bmi-calculator.net).

**HIGH SODIUM INTAKE**—The consumption of too much salt puts you at risk for developing hypertension. Your kidneys simply can’t process excessive salt consumption. Reduce your salt and your blood pressure will also reduce. (More on this in Chapter 6)

**ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION**—Studies show that consuming more than three alcoholic beverages per day will dramatically raise your blood pressure. Cut back and your blood pressure goes down.

**SMOKING**—You place yourself at risk every time you inhale a cancer stick, I mean cigarette. Smoking temporarily
elevates blood pressure by 5 mm/Hg to 10 mm/Hg for about a half-hour. If you smoke a pack a day and already have high blood pressure, you are exponentially increasing your risk of death.

**POOR DIET**—A diet high in calories, fat and sugar can cause weight gain and the development of hypertension. Moreover, deficiency in vitamin D in women and a high consumption of fructose and high fructose corn syrup have also been associated with an elevated risk of hypertension. (More on this in Chapter 6)

**PHYSICAL INACTIVITY**—A sedentary lifestyle and a general lack of daily exercise increases not only your risk of hypertension, but also your risk of developing obesity and heart disease. Regular exercise helps to control blood pressure, thus making it one of the best options for preventing and curing this disease. (More on this in Chapter 5)

**STRESS**—Studies have shown that people with heightened anxiety, intense anger and suppressed expression of anger are more at risk of developing high blood pressure.5 (More on this in Chapter 2)

**Drug Therapy and the Preventive Approach**

Mainstream medicine has developed some fine drugs for treating hypertension. These include diuretics, angiotensin converting enzymes, angiotensin receptor blockers, alpha blockers, beta blockers, calcium channel blockers and vasodilators.6 These pharmaceuticals respectively increase the elimination of sodium, inhibit the hormones that cause blood pressure to rise, alter the involuntary nervous system to force a decrease in pressure, reduce blood vessel constriction and dilate arteries to decrease overall pressure.
The problem is prescription drug therapy is often used too late; that is, after the diagnosis of hypertension has been given. Often times, the prescriptions must be taken in combination and they must be taken for the remainder of one’s life. While drugs can remove the symptoms and side effects of hypertension during the time they are being taken, they do not reverse or prevent high blood pressure from developing. Therefore, they should be thought of as a temporary first line to help reduce symptoms while you get your lifestyle changes in place.

The best way to avoid the health risks of hypertension is to prevent it from occurring in the first place. With regular monitoring of your blood pressure readings as confirmation of the positive changes you will make toward lowering stress, eating more healthfully, increasing daily exercise and realigning lifestyle choices, reversal of the disease and prevention of its return will not be far behind. The following sections of this book will show you how.
The Stress, High Blood Pressure Connection

Stress is one of the leading causes of illness in the United States. Nearly 66 percent of all signs and symptoms presented in doctors’ offices in the United States are stress induced, or related to the effects of stress.

The effects of stress include nail biting, anxiety, a racing mind, obsessive thoughts, compulsive behavior, unending worry, muscle tension and spasm, poor appetite or too great an appetite, digestive disorders, constipation, insomnia, poor blood flow, belabored breathing, neck pain, shoulder tension and the possible onset or continuation of bad habits like alcohol dependence, drug use, abuse of pain killers and the over consumption of food and caffeine.

Stress is a normal part of life and is necessary for our survival. However, too much stress, a combination of mental, physical, emotional, chemical or environmental stress and stress left unresolved over extended periods of time can lead to serious health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Natural and simple ways of reducing stress, without a doubt, are essential to any therapeutic hypertension program.

The Psychology of Stress

Stress is an interesting phenomenon and it means different things to different people. What we each individually
consider to be stressful is largely a matter of our perception. Indeed, our perceptions form and inform our realities and so what we think is posing a threat is actually doing so by virtue of our established belief system. Moreover, there are many kinds of stressors—physical (e.g., the response to being frightened), emotional (e.g., loss of a loved one), psychological (e.g., obsessive thoughts), spiritual (e.g., loss of faith) and psychosomatic (e.g., the need for attention).

Physiologically, stress is responsible for initiating the fight or flight response in the face of perceived danger. This means that when we are confronted with a danger, our body automatically prepares us to deal with the coming stressful situation by focusing our attention, pumping more blood into our muscles and sending the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol through our system. It is precisely this response that helps protect the body and return it again to homeostasis (our balanced, baseline of wellness).

However, at the conclusion of the danger episode the body does not as automatically calm down and return to homeostasis (its natural balanced state). In fact, it takes a great deal of time for the body to return to so-called normal conditions. But often this cannot happen because another stressor may present itself (e.g., sitting in traffic, standing in line at the bank, missing a deadline) and this will send our body into “code red” mode all over again.

Our inability to deal with stress creates severe biochemical imbalances in our body and prevents it from reestablishing homeostasis. Therefore, without learning to come to terms with our perceptions that cause the stress that leads to physiological, psychological, physical and emotional triggers that cause pain, illness and disease, we can never truly become “well.” One of the key elements of this state is raised blood pressure.
Stress-Induced High Blood Pressure

Stressful episodes of nervousness, worry, anger or physically demanding work temporarily raise blood pressure. When the stressor or stressful situation is removed, blood pressure goes back down. When the stressful event occurs again, blood pressure again rises. The problem occurs when stress is maintained at a high level for an extended period of time.

Hypertension research scientists are unsure at this point about the possible effects of long-term stress on high blood pressure. They believe that long-term stress can contribute to hypertension, but they are not sure how much of an impact it may actually have. In the case of short-term stressful situations, they know that stress can make blood pressure go up for a while. But once the stressor is removed or the situation is resolved, blood pressure readings return to normal. However, the removal and relief of stress is not always possible, thereby extending the duration of the raise in blood pressure. This is harmful because even if you do not actually have hypertension, the body is held in a pattern mimicking the ill effects of the disease. And if the effects are there long enough, you can then be said to have developed the disease. Getting a handle on stress is the way to avoid this. But how can you know when you’ve reached your normal coping capacity and have allowed your stress to move into dangerous territory?

Your body’s display of signs and symptoms is its natural means of communicating that something is wrong. It is way out of balance. Many people ignore the warning signs of stress. They think it is normal to feel exhausted, “burned out,” unable to concentrate and to drink or eat too much to
deal with anxiety—induced from their stressful situation. This is not normal, but it has become the way of life for millions of Americans. Working through the symptoms, dealing with the problems, pushing ahead and proving to yourself, taking over-the-counter or prescription pills to stay level... everyone is doing it! But these signs are telling you to slow down. If not, you may be headed for serious health problems. There are warning signs of stress you need to pay attention to. The box below lists the physical, mental, emotional and behavioral signs and symptoms that are related to stress and may also be indicators of hypertension.  

**Physical signs**—Dizziness, general aches and pains, grinding teeth, clenched jaws, headaches, indigestion, muscle tension, difficulty sleeping, racing heart, ringing in the ears, stooped posture, sweaty palms, tiredness, exhaustion, trembling, weight gain or loss, upset stomach

**Mental signs**—Constant worry, difficulty making decisions, forgetfulness, inability to concentrate, lack of creativity, loss of sense of humor

**Emotional signs**—Anger, anxiety, crying, depression, feeling powerless, frequent mood swings, irritability, loneliness, negative thinking, nervousness, sadness

**Behavioral signs**—Bossiness, compulsive eating, critical attitude of others, explosive actions, frequent job changes, impulsive actions, increased use of alcohol or drugs, withdrawal from relationships or social situations
The Stress Cycle

The vicious cause-and-effect cycle associated with stress is readily seen in our workplace where the pressure of productivity and the meeting of deadlines and bottom-line expectations lead us down a harrowing path. Consider the average day in the life of a corporate worker: Wakes up early, skips breakfast and rushes to the office; begins harboring stress and anxiety while watching the clock sitting in traffic; sits all days at the computer and/or negotiates personalities on the phone; takes breaks, not to stretch and take deep breaths of fresh air, but to artificially stimulate the body to work harder by puffing on cigarettes and downing another cup of coffee; then it’s back to work, pushing himself in an attempt to meet expectations wherein stress and tensions rise and take hold of the body. After work, to relax, office co-workers are joined for happy hour, and the body is nourished with more caffeine, cigarettes, fast food and too much alcohol. Later that evening the body
and mind are wound so tight and so stressed that there is no way to achieve deep, restful sleep.

Round and round, day after day it goes until the body finally rebels and “tells” you something is very wrong by way of an ulcer, gastrointestinal disorder or chronic pain in some manifestation. Years later, your doctor diagnoses your nagging symptoms as hypertension. Knowing the risks and poor lifestyle choices that over time cause high blood pressure, this should come as no surprise. Getting enough deep sleep is one of the easiest and most natural ways the body can repair the negative effects of daily stress and re-balance its blood pressure. Unfortunately for many, a full night’s sleep is a dream they once had.

Sleep Your Stress Away

Not only is sleep a fundamental human need, it is a necessity that no one who experiences poor health of any kind should ever take for granted. It is so important, in fact, that we naturally fall asleep when our bodies tell our brains that certain essential chemicals have been depleted and our muscles and organs are tired and in need of restoration.

The growing problem is that many of us rely on legal stimulants like coffee, tea, soda and energy drinks to force ourselves to remain awake and continue plugging away. Work, after all, can’t be held back by pleading with the boss or client. There just are not enough hours in the week. The result? We stay up too late and we get up too early and, to do this, we consume unhealthy amounts of toxic substances—day after night after day.

The net result is poor concentration, slower reaction times, decreased performance levels, less ability to learn and compartmentalize new skills and knowledge, more
frequent memory lapses, increases in simple injuries and accidents, adverse changes in moods and behaviors and an increased frequency of headaches, neck and shoulder pain, backaches, fatigue and overload of toxic beverage consumption. These all can lead to high blood pressure.

During sleep, the body is actually working to repair itself. The liver purifies blood, the muscles repair and serotonin increases. Without ample sleep, these things do not happen at optimal levels. In our natural circadian rhythm—or biological clock—sleep is set to take over during the evening hours. We are genetically programmed to get up and lie down with the sun. It was the invention of artificial sources of light (candles and then light bulbs) that began our stressed-out drive for more working hours at the expense of much-needed rest.

What’s the big deal, you ask, if you sleep only a few hours per night? You can always drink coffee, consume energy drinks, take caffeine pills or snatch a cat nap. Well, not really. Did you know that in clinical tests rats die within a few short weeks of sleep deprivation? And it’s not just rats at risk. Harvard Medical School researchers correlated the association between lack of sleep and hypertension, heart attack and cancer.8

Chronic fatigue, adrenal fatigue, attention deficit disorder, chronic migraine and headache, body aches and pain, mental illness, depression and anxiety are all in part caused—or made worse—by lack of sleep. It is essential for those with episodic high blood pressure or full-blown hypertension to do their best to get eight hours of sound, restful sleep per night.

There are a number of techniques for helping one do this. The box on next page offers seven tips to help
decrease the incidence and duration of insomnia and help you get your eight hours of restful sleep.

For those who exercise at night… flip the schedule. It’s keeping you up by moving blood and energy through your system. Researchers at Stanford University School of Medicine found that adults ages 55 to 75 who engaged in 20 to 30 minutes of low-impact exercise (like walking) every other day in the afternoon, were able to fall asleep in half their normal time. What’s more, their sleep duration increased on average by one full hour!⁹

What does all this mean? Good health begins as easily and naturally as putting in plenty of sack time. Try for a

1) Do not consume ANY sugar or caffeine after 6:00 pm.
2) Stop working at least two hours before bedtime.
3) Turn off the computer and television at least one hour before bedtime.
4) Make sure your sleeping quarters are as dark and silent as possible. Studies have shown that those in darker and quieter spaces tend to sleep through the night more deeply than others.
5) Establish a sleep/wake schedule and stick to it.
6) Make a set routine out of bedtime. Change into pajamas, brush your teeth, set out clothes for the morning, even jot down any last thoughts but promise yourself to revisit them tomorrow, then turn off the light… breathe deep, relax, sleep tight.
7) If your racing mind is nagging, meditate. (Described in the next section.)
straight eight hours. And maybe think about buying a new set of sheets to celebrate the new healthier happier sounder sleeping you!

10 Stress Busters

The idea behind living a stress-free life is to remove the things in your life that are causing you to be stressed. Of course this is easier said than done, but it is truly the only way not to have stress. For most people, this is impossible, as their relationship with work, their financial situation

10 Ways to Reduce Your Stress

1) Walk outside for at least 20 continuous minutes every day.

2) Take the stairs whenever possible.

3) Take 10 deep belly breaths every hour.

4) Drink plenty of pure water—at least 10 glasses a day.

5) Avoid sugar and caffeine in all forms.

6) Regulate sleep and wake cycles to a consistent daily routine.

7) Prioritize your life, work, family and personal time and activities.

8) Do six shoulder shrugs whenever you are tense.

9) Realize that when people criticize and judge, they are labeling an “image” of you and not you personally.

10) Realize that you are worth so much more than the sum of your titles, money and belongings.
and the people around them create their stress. Mind-body techniques for “reframing” the way those things are perceived are described in Chapter 3. For now, here are 10 simple things you can do on a daily basis to reduce the symptoms of stress (see page 27).

A good stress-relief program should be sought and followed. Good programs generally include various forms of meditation, visualization, qigong, yoga, acupressure and biofeedback. Not all programs contain everything, but engaging in any or some of these will go a long way to reclaiming years for your life. The next section discusses these methods.
There are many causes of stress, high blood pressure and ill health. Yet despite high-tech medical advances, low-tech massage and other treatments, people are still suffering. The answer may well be found within the mind and the hold it has over our thoughts, emotions and the quality of our physical bodies. When the mind (psycho) and the body (soma) come together in adverse ways to manifest, aggravate or prolong episodes of stress and elevated blood pressure, you are at risk of serious and potentially life-threatening health issues like heart disease and stroke.

**Mind-Body Medicine**

In decades past, the term psychosomatic was primarily used by psychologists to identify pains or illnesses that were “all in the mind” and “not real.” This outlook is dated and false. The mind is so powerful it has within itself the ability to heal the body. Practices like yoga, qigong and meditation were once considered the esoteric domain of traditional cultures. Today in the West, however, they are now considered mainstream practices and fall under the wellness classification known as “mind-body medicine.”

The practices of mind-body medicine include those
techniques that help create an environment where in the mind can affect the function and symptoms of the body. These methods include deep breathing, meditation, visualization, slow movements and exercises, prayer, chanting and listening to soothing sounds and music. Mind-body medicine also incorporates various psychological techniques for clearing out old, harmful thought patterns and the way in which events are perceived.

In the following sections we will look at the mind-body practices like The Sedona Method™, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Meditation, Qigong and Yoga.

**The Sedona Method™**

Pioneered by Lester Levenson, The Sedona Method™ is a powerful yet easy-to-learn technique that teaches you how to “let go” of unwanted emotions in an instant. When left unresolved, negative emotions can cause symptoms of ill-health—symptoms that include stress, pain, anxiety and high blood pressure. Essentially, The Sedona Method™ consists of a series of questions you ask yourself that leads your awareness to what you are feeling in the moment and then gently guides you into the experience of letting go.

This method is easy to do because there are only a few steps necessary to accomplish the release of new or decades-old pent up negative emotions. With so many successes, this again points to the vital role the mind and emotions play in the health issues we suffer in our bodies—those psychosomatic illnesses.

The effectiveness of The Sedona Method™ has been validated by respected scientific researchers at major universities and the MONY Corporation. In fact, if you’re not feeling happy, confident and relaxed at least 90 percent
of the time, practitioners of this method tell us, then chances are manifestations of ill health are tied to unresolved negative emotions.

The Sedona Method’s™ “releasing” operates on the “feeling” level, so it’s easy. It teaches you to “let go” of years of mental programs and accumulated feelings in just seconds.

There is a comprehensive book on this method available everywhere, titled *The Sedona Method™*, and there are plenty of websites dedicated to the method. Please take a look and see how this mind-body method might help you resolve unwanted emotional toxicity from your life to reduce your stress and lower your blood pressure.

**Neuro-Linguistic Programming**

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is the art of understanding and communicating with our minds. It breaks down this way: Neuro (understanding the nervous system and the five senses), linguistic (understanding language and how it really affects our minds) and programming (understanding our ability to organize our neurological systems—thought processes).

In terms of biological warning signs like elevated blood pressure, headache, blurry vision and the inability to focus or get sound sleep, it is important to keep in mind that all adverse health symptoms are merely “information” provided by your body. When there is a problem with your body, it communicates this to your brain via nerve impulses. These impulses are “signals” that send the symptomatic information to the brain to make you uncomfortable in an effort to force you to do something about it and, hopefully, return the body to homeostasis (its balanced state).
On the whole this is a good system. However, it becomes an issue with long-term stress and blood pressure problems as these adverse conditions wreak havoc on your health and quality of life. What NLP teaches you is to take control of your thoughts and how to become free to change your mind... about what you are thinking and how you are thinking about it.

If you understand the way your brain processes information and you understand why and how language impacts your feelings, then you will start to see you can reprogram your mind and change the way you feel. And the way you feel is generally a response to and an indicator of the quality of your health.

NLP can be used in many ways and for many things. One way is through a technique known as “re reframing.” Reframing is a nice way to start using basic NLP principles. It’s easy and it shows you that your outlook on life has a lot to do with the life you lead. Reframing is your first step toward a more positive mindset regarding stress and hypertension and for your whole life.

Let’s think about the symptoms of stress and hypertension for a moment. These include: Headache, fatigue, confusion, anxiety, insomnia, chest pain, difficulty breathing, irregular heartbeat and more. As stated earlier, adverse health symptoms are simply a form of communication. You may say to yourself, “My head hurts, I am feeling anxious, I need more sleep, my blood pressure is high and I need to see my doctor because I am afraid I may have a serious health problem.”

According to practitioners of NLP, what you in fact are doing by stating this concern (which you might do repeatedly to as many people as will listen) is letting yourself know you have all of these problems. By focusing on the problems, you are actually reaffirming a negative cycle. The practice of
NLP can “reframe” the above negative thought pattern into a positive one.

“Stress is killing me with all these symptoms. My body is telling me to be careful and slow down before my episodic high blood pressure becomes full-blown hypertension. Ok, I should do some mind-body exercises and be sure to get enough sleep to release these symptoms. I must also be aware that I need to watch out for things that could add too much pressure to my life at this point. I am vulnerable and it is good that my body reminds me through these symptoms to look after my health. So to thank my body I must keep up with my natural program of reversing and preventing hypertension.”

Rather than fighting against the information—fighting the message—you can use reframing to acknowledge the problem and take affirmative action steps to reduce and eliminate your elevated stress and blood pressure. Then, while engaged in your corrective program, you will be mindful to listen to the communication of information from your body to your brain and acknowledge the relief as it comes… slow or fast. Here are the three Steps to Reframing:

**STEP 1**—Identify the problem. Sounds easy, but often we react rather than reason. So the first thing to do is take a moment to be with your symptoms and assess them so you can understand the why, when and how of them. Why is it happening (e.g., your diet is poor and you smoke)? When is it happening (e.g., during stressful periods of work or family time)? What is happening (e.g., pounding headaches, chest pain, insomnia)? How is it happening (e.g., it is fear-based as you worry that it will get bad so you get in the mindset of being in pain)?
**STEP 2**—Separate the intention from the learned behavior. In other words, you slow down to really talk to yourself about a better way to deal with the problem at hand. You might say, “Okay, I know I am having negative symptoms related to stress and high blood pressure, but it’s not a disease and it’s reversible and preventable.” Thinking and acknowledging in this way keeps you focused on getting to step three.

**STEP 3**—Set a positive way forward. You can even thank your body for the message of pain, as it focused you to work with better intention for achieving your best health and long-term life goals. You can reframe in many ways, just look at the positive view of the situation and let your mind work for you!

**Meditation: Focus, Observe and Acknowledge**

Meditation is practiced in countless ways. Each country, each religion has its own means of meditation for spiritual discipline, healing practice or mechanism for psychological growth. People engage in meditation because they find it empowering, rewarding, healing, meaningful, peaceful… and much more. For those under constant stress and suffering hypertension, it can be transforming.

Mindfulness meditation is a simple and powerful method to use for beginners and its general method is outlined here. It is best to find a quiet space and a block of time in which you will not be disturbed. Wear loose-fitting clothing and be sure to relieve yourself before you begin. You should also not be too hungry nor too full, but comfortably satisfied and at ease. Here’s how to do it:

In the beginning you may experience the following:
A tendency to fall asleep; a mind that appears to race more
than usual (it probably isn’t, but your senses are closed so you just notice it more); legs that may fall asleep or tingle from poor flexibility or cramping; a tendency to unknowingly lose focus of your breathing and find that your mind has wandered to another part of your body or to a drifting thought. All of this is all okay… don’t stress over it.

Mindfulness meditation is about being mindful of your breath, your thoughts and the tension in your body. Continued practice will greatly reduce obstructions, freeing your mind and spirit to become one and act on more important things.

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**Mindfulness Meditation Process**

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position that allows your spine to be straight and your head aligned with it.
- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to ease into the moment and begin to relax.
- Focus your attention on your breath as it passes the tip of your nose.
- As you inhale, merely OBSERVE, without mental comment, the sensation you feel as air passes the tip of your nose.
- As you exhale, merely OBSERVE, without mental comment, the sensation you feel as air passes the tip of your nose.
- When thoughts enter your mind, do not engage them, do not pass judgment on them. Merely ACKNOWLEDGE that they are there and return to observing the sensation of the breath on the tip of the nose.
However, this takes time. In the meantime, consider all of these distractions as a microcosm of your life: Every day you deal with multiple people talking with you at once, dozens of sounds flooding your ears and disruptions in work. And like this meditation, as these distractions arise you simply acknowledge them and then return to the task at hand, whether it’s being mindful of your breathing or focused on your business or sales pitch or deciding between two pressing circumstances when you really need to be doing a third.

There are many benefits to the daily practice of mindfulness meditation including improved concentration, enhanced focus, unshakable emotions, inner fortitude, understanding of the self, objectivity, concentrated decision-making power and peace of mind. Physiologically, you will experience a decrease in blood pressure, respiration and metabolism, the nervous systems calm, hormones and chemicals balance and the body is allowed to return to its natural harmonious state of homeostasis.

**Qigong: Coordinating Thought, Breath and Movement**

Qigong is the name given to ancient Chinese systems of breath work and energy cultivation. In essence, qigong exercises balance energy in the body through coordination of thought, breath and movement in specific ways.
STUDY: Meditation Can Lower Blood Pressure and Increase Coping Ability

A study published in the December issue of the American Journal of Hypertension, suggests that the practice of transcendental meditation may lower blood pressure and reduce mental anguish in people who suffer from hypertension, according to U.S. News and World Report.

Conducted at American University, the research followed nearly 300 students, half of which practiced transcendental meditation on a daily basis over a three-month period of time.

Subjects in the meditation group who were at an elevated risk of hypertension considerably lowered their blood pressure and psychological distress levels while strengthening their coping ability.

Individuals who meditated who were not at risk of hypertension saw a decline in depression and anxiety as well as an increased coping ability, but no substantial lowering of their blood pressure.

“This is the first randomized controlled trial to demonstrate that a selected mind-body intervention, the transcendental meditation program, decreased blood pressure in association with decreased psychological distress and increased coping in young adults at risk for hypertension,” said the authors of the study, quoted by ModernMedicine.com.

The Mayo Clinic states that meditation can give one a sense of “calm” and can help “improve certain medical conditions.”
Natural Ways to Reverse and Prevent Hypertension

The nucleus of qigong is the exercise of consciousness and vital energy. The goal being to circulate, build and balance qi (vital energy) throughout the body to promote physical and mental health. When energy is enhanced, blockages

STUDY: Qigong Effective for Reducing the Effects of Essential Hypertension

Abstract from the American Journal of Chinese Medicine, Summer, 2003 by Myung Suk Lee, Myeong Soo Lee, Euy-Soon Choi, Hun-Taeg Chung

This study was designed to measure changes in blood pressure (BP), urinary catecholamines and ventilatory functions of patients with mild essential hypertension after 10 weeks of qigong.

Fifty-eight patients volunteered to participate in this study and were randomly divided into either a qigong group (n = 29), or a control group (n = 29). Systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure decreased significantly in the qigong group such that both became significantly lower after 10 weeks in the qigong than in the control group.

Also, there was a significant reduction of norepinephrine, metanephrine and epinephrine compared to baseline values in the qigong group. The ventilatory functions, forced vital capacity and forced expiratory volume per sec, were increased in the qigong group, but not the control group.

These results suggest that qigong may stabilize the sympathetic nervous system, is effective in modulating levels of urinary catecholamines and BP positively and in improving ventilatory functions in mildly hypertensive middle-aged patients.

The nucleus of qigong is the exercise of consciousness and vital energy. The goal being to circulate, build and balance qi (vital energy) throughout the body to promote physical and mental health. When energy is enhanced, blockages
(stagnations) of blood, oxygen and nutrients to the cells are removed and toxins are able to release. With this enhanced function comes restored liver function and lower blood pressure.

Regular practice of qigong exercises aid in regulating the functions of the central nervous system. Along with exercising and controlling one’s mind and body, qigong influences one’s physical states and pathological conditions, including high blood pressure.

When practicing qigong exercises, it is essential that you remain relaxed and focused throughout each breath. Breathe slowly and steadily while expanding and contracting the respective areas of the body, as dictated by the exercise. Below I share two simple qigong exercises that help reduce the effects of stress and high blood pressure.

**Qi Ball**—This exercise teaches you how to feel, circulate and control the flow of qi (energy) between your hands. The hands are the easiest place to begin experiencing the qi energy and, since feeling is believing, it is a good place to start.

Begin by closing your eyes, relaxing your respiration and clearing your mind. With your elbows bent and your arms held away from your body, configure your arms and hands as if you were holding a basketball. Hold this position while breathing into your abdomen and focusing
your intention on the space between your hands—but do not move them until a sensation is felt. The sensation may be heat, tingling or heaviness.

Once a sensation of energy is felt between your hands, very slowly and very slightly move them apart (less than two inches) while inhaling. It is important to time the full breath with the full movement, so the hands must move slowly. Then exhale while very slowly pushing your hands together back to their starting position. Again, the exhalation must come to an end as the hands reach their starting point. Timing of breath and movement and holding of intention in the hands is vital to the exercise.
People generally report a feeling between their hands that is akin to magnets being pushed together. There is a magnetic resistance between the hands and this is the energy coming from the hands and meeting in the middle. The closer the hands, the more concentration of energy between them and the harder it is to close them. Repeat for at least five minutes and as long as 20 minutes and you will not only increase your energy but you will shift into a state of relaxation where stress is relieved and blood pressure is reduced.

**Standing pole**—The standing pole exercise aims to circulate qi (energy) throughout the body, from the bottom to the top and from the back to the front. It aids in whole-body circulation of blood and energy and stretches and adjusts 19 vertebrae—from the coccyx to T1.

Begin by standing comfortably with shoulders relaxed, legs a comfortable shoulders-width apart and knees very slightly bent. Keep your arms slightly away from your torso. Your arms, hands and neck should be relaxed. Breath, mind and movement are coordinated and all movements should be slow, steady and deliberate.

While inhaling, concentrate on pulling qi (energy) up from the ground. The qi moves through your heels and up the back of your legs. As the qi passes your knees they straighten. The qi then continues past your hips up your spine to the shoulder area. When the qi reaches the base of the spine, begin to pull your shoulders up, thus moving the energy up the spine and to the top of your head. Your hips, waist and spine contract and rise as the qi moves through each area.

While exhaling, concentrate on moving the qi down your front side the moment of moving your body following the energy movement. Follow the movement of qi from the
top of your head as your shoulders move forward, down across your forehead and face, down your chest and down your stomach. At this point, the qi splits off and goes down both legs as your knees bend and out the balls of your feet.

Repeat this sequence for at least five minutes, but as long as you like. While performing the standing pole exercise, you should experience a feeling of warmth over each area the qi travels. Be sure to keep your breath and movement coordinated and your mind on the sensation of the energy as it passes over each part of your body. With this you will experience a meditative state wherein the mind quiets down, muscles relax and energy moves freely within the body. This state allows the body to return to homeostasis, thereby allowing the symptoms of stress to subside and blood pressure to reduce.

**Yoga: The Posture of Health**

Yoga is an ancient Indian practice of health and well-being. As an exercise, it involves holding and moving between various postures, specified breathing methods and meditation. While the aim of traditional yoga is unifying mind and body with spirit, in the West it has come to be seen as a relaxing or muscle-toning physical activity, depending on yoga style.

Regardless of which method of yoga is practiced, studies have confirmed its healing properties. In fact, many studies have found that regular practice of yoga can reduce blood pressure by as much as 15 mm/Hg. With extended practice of yoga, a level of fitness is achieved and weight loss experienced which is also responsible for additional lowering of blood pressure.

Yoga can be an effective preventive measure and
reversal mechanism of hypertension by virtue of its ability to induce a deep calming effect and slower breathing. This mechanism brings down the stress-induced fight or flight response, thereby reducing the levels of the hormones adrenaline and cortisol that are pumping through your system.

According to Dr. Sujit Chandratreya, Research Team member with Yoga Vidya Gurukul, “Regular Yoga may reduce stress hormone ‘aldosterone’ which is a potent vasoconstrictor (which contracts blood vessels thus increasing BP). Preliminary studies also point out to the fact that regular yoga practice may reduce ‘Vasopressin’ another stress hormone secreted by pituitary gland in the brain. Vasopressin increases B.P. by vascular contraction.”

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STUDY: Yoga Beneficial In Reducing Hypertension

August 24, 2007 by www.medicalnewstoday.com

The 2002 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) found nearly 30 million users of relaxation techniques including meditation and yoga and 10 million users of yoga therapies. One-fourth of those who used mind-body therapies rated them “very helpful.”

The review and synthesis of 12 published randomized trials found largely favorable effects of the most popular mind-body therapies on systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Mind-Body Therapies (MBT) significantly reduced systolic blood pressure (SBP) by a mean 11.52 mm/Hg and diastolic blood pressure (DBP) by 6.83 mm/Hg. Of the three MBT analyzed, yoga therapies demonstrated results of the greatest magnitude, with mean SBP reductions of 19.07 mm/Hg and DBP by 13.13 mm/Hg. Significant results were seen in SBP reductions by yoga and meditation therapy, while only yoga therapies demonstrated significant reductions in DBP.

The absolute reductions in blood pressure were comparable to pharmacologic monotherapy in both effect size and temporality. Additionally, reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure to the degree found in yoga interventions were associated with reductions in vascular death rates as well as decreased overall cardiac risk.
According to Dr. Ali, the lead author, “This review shows that there is some high quality scientific literature supporting the use of mind-body therapies as a treatment for hypertension and the magnitude of effect is clinically significant.” Despite the limitations of a review, he suggests mind-body interventions may be prudent choices for adjunctive treatment for motivated patients.

There are innumerable ways in which one can benefit from the practice of mind-body exercises, like those taught in The Sedona Method™, neuro-linguistic programming, meditation, qigong and yoga. The meditative states and breathing exercises improve blood circulation and enrich the body with more red blood cells. This increases the supply of oxygen to the tissues and promotes healthier tissues and organs. The greater supply of oxygen enables the heart to pump slower while still providing enough oxygen to the body. Imbalances such as high blood pressure and rapid heart rate are made normal with prolonged, proper practice of breathing exercises.

Perhaps the most powerful effect of disciplined and prolonged practice of mind-body medicine is the ability to live in the moment. That is, removing the past and future, knowing that there is only now and that every taste, smell, task, event and thing you say or do now is all there is. It allows you to experience life’s fullest potential.
Energy Medicine for Lowering Blood Pressure

Everything in the Universe is made up of energy and is vibrating at specific frequencies. Quantum physics has proven this to be fact. Human beings are essentially physical bodies constructed of various frequencies of energetic vibration. The quality of these vibrations can be controlled by our thoughts and are represented in every organ, system and fluid in our body. Sickness, therefore, equates to low or poor quality energetic vibrations in each of our cells.

All aspects of health and wellbeing—including hypertension—are tied to energetic frequencies. You must change your energetic frequency to feel better and live better. When you can do this, stress reduces, blood pressure normalizes and disorders such as overeating, drinking and smoking become a thing of the past.

The Energy Body

Traditional cultures around the world built their healing models on correcting energetic imbalances in the body. Indeed, the role of Shamans in Siberia, Alaska and Southeast Asia was to eradicate “bad spirits” (i.e., negative energy) from the body to restore physical or mental health in those suffering. The entire pantheon of Chinese and
Indian healing practices were built on the premise of energy systems and pathways in the body that, when blocked, cause pain and disease. Clearing these channels or centers of blocked energy (e.g., toxins, spasms) is what restores health to the ill and offers relief to the pain sufferer.

Perhaps the most common term used to talk about human energy, is aura. This is a general term used to describe the color, mood or quality of five overlapping energy layers. These layers of energy (or “energy bodies”) refer to the spiritual, mental, emotional, etherical and physical energies that make up humans.

Energy is developed, stored and moved in the body through the adrenals, the organs, chakra centers and meridian pathways. There is a saying in traditional Chinese medicine that tells why we experience pain: “Where there is energy blockage, there is illness. Where energy moves freely, there is no illness.”

The key to pain relief and lasting health, then, is to open the energy channels, raise your vibration frequency and keep your energy moving at all times. There are a number of alternative therapies whose primary function is focused on just that. Let’s look at a few here.

**Acupuncture: Energetic Needle Therapy**

All Chinese body-healing practices are based on the idea that energy flows through the body in channels called meridians. These transport energy and life essence from organ to organ. Again, where there is slow energy or blockage, there is felt pain and soon disease.

Acupuncture, one of the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) modalities, is an ancient system of medicine in which fine needles are used by licensed practitioners to pierce the skin
on specific points to a depth of a few millimeters. They are withdrawn after a period of about 28 minutes. The needles can be likened to an antenna, which draws in bioelectric energy into a very small port on the body, which then regulates the functions of the meridian system.

Using a correct “prescription” of points, the practitioner can in effect change the energy in a patient by opening their channels to help their energy move more freely. Again, when energy moves freely there is no disease.

STUDY: Acupuncture Lowers Blood Pressure

by Anhui Clinical Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine

In a trial conducted in China, 216 patients with a diagnosis of primary hypertension were randomized into three active treatment groups: Ear acupuncture (N=72); corporal acupuncture (N=72); and a combination of ear and corporal acupuncture (N=72). Each group received a 20-minute treatment once a day for 10 days.

A significant effective response was defined as either the diastolic pressure returning to the normal range and the reduction was >10 mm/Hg, or the diastolic pressure reduction was greater than 20 mm/Hg even if the reduction did not return to the normal range.

All three groups showed a statistically significant reduction of blood pressure. In the combination ear and corporal acupuncture group, a significant effective response was observed in 43 out of 72 patients with a total response rate of 86.1 percent.
Acupuncture is widely practiced today and worth looking into. It has been around for 5,000 years… not too shabby!

**Reiki: A Laying-On of Hands**

Reiki is a Japanese energy technique for reducing stress and inducing relaxation to help promote the free-flow of energy in the body. To be most effective, Reiki requires the “laying on of hands” of a practitioner in order for its benefits to be gained.

Reiki practitioners place their hands on patients in various configurations that are modeled on ancient Tibetan and Chinese powerful healing symbols. It is believed that re-creating these symbols on the body will allow “God’s energy” to flow from the universe, through the practitioner and into the patient. This energy, which is vibrating at a high frequency, will lift the low energy of the sufferer to relieve pain and illness.
Reiki has become a popular healing modality among nurses in hospitals. The patient does not have to be awake for them to administer a few minutes of healing touch.

**The Six Healing Sounds**

Human sound is an essential part of our existence. Indeed, the spoken word is nothing but an intricate combination of sounds strung together to form words. For centuries, human sound has been directly linked to the healing process. In fact, it is a natural part of life from birth. There is screaming and grunting during labor to help centralize energy and apply force when pushing. A baby cries when it is born to open its lungs. Children cry to help soothe their feelings and parents say hush or shhh to babies to quiet them down.

I would like to introduce you here to an ancient Taoist practice of human sound healing called Liu Zi Jue, or the Six Healing Sounds. The six sounds are monosyllabic utterances that, when repeated and sustained, help accomplish the following things: Unity of mind and body, removal of symptoms, return of the body to homeostasis and quieting of the mind and enlivening energy.

Because disease is brought on by imbalances in the organs or the energy, blood and body fluids derived from or processed by those organs, the healing sounds can, if done for prolonged periods over time, return the body to homeostasis. The sound themselves resonate only with the organs they are meant to effect. Thus, there is an undeniable link between the sound and the illnesses brought on by organ dysfunction. If an organ is in excess or stagnant energy, blood or fluids (as in the case with hypertension), the healing sound will rebalance the organ and, over time, remove the dysfunction.
Natural Ways to Reverse and Prevent Hypertension

For best results with the practice, place your hands over the organs you are sounding to and then sing or hum the sounds so you can feel the resonance in the organ. If you can be undisturbed for 30 minutes you will have plenty of time to relax and get into the exercise.

When you are feeling ill, tired, stressed, anxious or depressed, the practice of the healing sounds can bring new energy and balance to the organ systems affecting the mood and help you become vibrant and restore your health.

Hypertension is the result of excess energy in the blood pushing against the arterial walls. The above-mentioned energy medicine therapies are just a handful of those that are able to bring relief by correcting energetic imbalances in the body. They are based on thousands of years of trial-and-error application and have an amazing track record of success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Associated Organs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xu (shooo)</td>
<td>to calm the liver and gallbladder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho (hooo)</td>
<td>to open the heart and small intestines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu (fooo)</td>
<td>to cool the spleen and stomach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xi (sheee)</td>
<td>to awaken the lungs and large intestines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chu (chooo)</td>
<td>to release the kidneys and bladder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey (haaa)</td>
<td>to energize the pericardium and body trunk</td>
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</tbody>
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Exercise and Blood Pressure

Exercise and blood pressure are closely related. It’s no secret that regular physical activity makes the heart stronger. And a stronger heart is more able to pump blood through the body, even a sluggish one. When the heart is stronger it is able to do the same amount of work as a weaker heart, but with much less effort. With less effort comes a decrease on the pressure forced against the walls of your arteries and, thus, a lowering of blood pressure.

According to the Mayo Clinic,13 “Becoming more active can lower your systolic blood pressure (the top number in a blood pressure reading) by an average of 5 to 10 mm/Hg. That’s as good as some blood pressure medications. For some people, getting some exercise is enough to reduce the need for blood pressure medication.”

Increase Your Physical Activity

An on-going exercise routine also helps with body mass reduction (weight loss), which itself is a reversal and preventive measure against hypertension. Moreover, if your blood pressure is within normal ranges, exercise can help maintain it even as you age. Nothing happens overnight though, and it takes a few months of regular exercise to see a reduction in blood pressure readings. What’s more, the benefits will only remain as long as the exercise routine is maintained. Becoming sedentary later,
all else being equal, will result again in a rise in blood pressure.

It is important to know that difficult or intense physical activity is not necessary to reap weight loss and blood pressure lowering results. Engaging in regular physical activities as simple as yard work, cleaning the house, tennis, swimming, walking and Pilates do the job well. On the contrary, too vigorous an exercise program can actually have adverse effects and has been shown to lead to heart disease.

**Vigorous Exercise Increases Risk of Heart Disease**

In recent research coming out of New York University Medical Center, it is suggested that the more often one engages in vigorous exercise the greater their risk of developing atrial fibrillation (AF). AF is a condition characterized by irregular, rapid heart rate and affects people in many ways, from simple fainting to heart failure and stroke!

In the study, participants were divided into two groups: An exercise group and a non-exercise group. Men who exercised long or hard enough to break a sweat five to seven days per week actually increased their chances of developing AF by an enormous 20 percent! And the non-exercise control group? No increase in their propensity for AF was reported.

The big surprise is this: The participants who were in the “break a sweat” group were deemed to be “healthy.” It was made up of men under the age of 50 who run on a regular basis. Common sense would say the opposite results should be the case. But, the study clearly shows that the incidence of
atrial fibrillation in men who jog increased by a massive 50 percent! And it was up by 74 percent in young men who break a sweat on a regular basis! For those who run marathons, training for them from between 10 and 19 hours per week, the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ)*\textsuperscript{15} and the *Athens Medical School* (AMS)*\textsuperscript{16} also reported study results supporting the vigorous exercise and heart disease equation.

By now, you may be worried about your own condition. However, it seems that AF is common and even expected in so-called healthy athletes. This is the case because cardiomegaly (enlargement of the heart) is so common in athletes that doctors don’t even tell them they have a condition that can lead to heart disease. Yet in normal, non-athletic people, if their electrocardiograms showed these same signs, the doctors would be very concerned and would let them know!

The long and short is this: The essence of the study indicates that breaking a sweat on a regular basis is bad for your heart. And history shows that marathoners and other top athletes die at a young age as a result of heart disease. And in China, where tai chi and qigong are practiced by millions, heart disease and young heart-related deaths are amongst the world’s lowest rates. Below, we’ll look at one exercise that offers big rewards but asks for little exertion in return.

**The “Pile Standing” Exercise**

In my search for the best in holistic medicine I have traveled the globe and spent time with healers of all types: Shamans, psychic surgeons, qigong masters, faith healers, herbalists, bone setters… you name it. While studying a method of qigong in Asia known as Zhan Zhuang (“Pile Standing”), my teacher told me something very strange.
“This neigong (internal) exercise forces you to stand still and not move for a long time. Because of this, your energy will increase, your body will warm and your muscles will strengthen. But you will not damage your joints from excessive movement, nor tax your heart through robust movement, nor damage the lungs through too rapid respiration.”

I have to say that I had trouble swallowing this last part and for the past 15 years I have been trying to reason it out in my mind… why not increase heart rate and respiration? After all, isn’t the entire fitness industry in the Western world based on elevating heart rate, increasing lung capacity and burning calories from sweating and muscle strength development? Well, like with so many other things, it looks like the ancient Chinese knew what they were talking about. As the BMJ and AMS studies indicated, there is a risk of heart disease from vigorous exercise.

Since “pile standing” is a simple exercise that requires only the space of standing, it is perfect for the busy person suffering from hypertension who also has no time to memorize new exercise routines or go to a Pilates class.

This practice is as easy as 1) standing with your legs a shoulder’s width apart, 2) bending the knees only one-to-two-inches and 3) bending both arms and holding them at the same level. Following are two standing postures for you to do in sequence or on alternating days if you want to mix things up.

For the first posture, stand as described above, with both arms held out at the sides, elbows bent slightly, forearms parallel to the ground and palms facing down. Try to imagine that your palms are floating on water. And don’t move a muscle!
Once the posture is assumed, quiet the mind by not stressing over distracting thoughts that may come—simply allow them to go freely without judgment. Next, regulate respiration by quietly breathing in and out at a steady relaxed pace. Now enjoy yourself for the next 10 to 20 minutes. You’ll be surprised to find how difficult merely standing still can be, but you’ll derive numerous benefits as a result.

For the second posture, stand as described above while holding the arms in front of you, elbows bent at chest level, palms facing your body. It’s like you’re hugging a tree. Don’t move a muscle!

Once the posture is assumed, quiet the mind by not stressing over distracting thoughts that may come—simply allow them to go freely without judgment. Next, regulate respiration by quietly breathing in and out at a steady relaxed pace. Now enjoy yourself for the next 10 to 20 minutes. Again you’ll be surprised to find how difficult merely standing still can be.
You see, while it appears as if you are doing nothing at all, in actuality the body is engaged in a process of physical activity. While quieting the mind and regulating respiration you are reducing stress, relaxing the cerebral cortex and rejuvenating the central nervous system. You are also working muscles by virtue of maintaining an isometric posture wherein the knees and elbows are bent and the arms are raised. This must be held steady without release until the end of the session. This elevates heart rate without overtaxing the heart, improves the circulation of blood and oxygen throughout the body and increases metabolic functions while releasing toxins and tension from the body.

**Walk Your Way to Lower Blood Pressure**

If done correctly, brisk walking can be one of the safest, most beneficial and enjoyable exercises for anyone. Walking is an aerobic activity, but since it is low-impact

**“Movement Within Stillness”**

“Standing pole is an exercise of the whole body. As the outer form of the body is not moved, all the internal organs settle, while all metabolic functions increase. This develops movement within non-movement, that is, unhindered internal activity and movement within external stillness. It is a non-violent and non-overburdening exercise, simultaneously providing rest and exercise, easily adaptable to any condition and encouraging development of the body’s innate strengths and abilities in a natural way.”

Excerpt from *Traditional Chinese Therapeutic Exercises*¹⁷
there is little wear-and-tear on the joints and little (if any) triggering of pain from the jarring action of the body often experienced in high-impact aerobic exercise or jogging.

Although it is a simple activity, walking actually utilizes most of the muscles of the body to propel you forward and keep you on balance while increasing respiration, heart and lung function, blood and oxygen flow and the “burning off” of blood sugars and fats and removal of toxins and other wastes through sweat and improved eliminative functions.

Walking is indeed simple and ordinary. Yet in one 30-minute session you can raise HDL (good cholesterol) levels, increase respiration within safe limits, sweat out toxins, release endorphins (the feel-good hormone), improve heart function, begin reducing weight, reduce stress, promote relaxation and improve overall endurance and body tone. All of these have a positive overall effect on blood pressure.

Whether it’s walking, standing, Pilates or yard work, exercise is an essential part of any hypertension reversal and prevention program. Here’s what Arthur Agatston, M.D., author of The South Beach Diet, says about it: “Exercise lowers your blood pressure and increases your good cholesterol. Exercise regularly and eat properly and you’re doing just about all you can to ensure a healthy cardiac future. You’re already doing far more for yourself than medical science can do for you” (p. 93). So go ahead and take a brisk 30-minute walk and later that day or the next day, stand still for 30 minutes. You may never feel as good as this.
A new study shows that even a little bit of weekly exercise is enough to lower blood pressure and improve overall fitness.

In the study, published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, researchers invited 106 healthy but sedentary civil servants to take part in an exercise program for 12 weeks. About a third were told to briskly walk for 30 minutes, five days a week. Another third were told to briskly walk for 30 minutes a day, three days a week; the remaining third were told not to change their sedentary lifestyle at all.

The participants wore pedometers to monitor their walking and researchers measured their blood pressure, blood cholesterol, weight, hip and waist size and overall fitness before and after the study.

The results showed systolic (the top number) blood pressure dropped—and waist and hip measurements shrunk significantly—in both the three-day-a-week and five-day-a-week exercise groups.

Systolic blood pressure dropped by five points among those who exercised three days a week and by six points among those who exercised five days a week.

Waist and hip measurements fell by 2.6 centimeters and 2.4 centimeters respectively among the three-day-a-week exercisers and by 2.5 centimeters and 2.2 centimeters among the five-day-a-week exercise group.
No changes were found in the sedentary group. Researcher Mark A. Tully of Queen’s University in Belfast, Northern Ireland, says a decrease of a few points in blood pressure and a few centimeters in the waist and hips is enough to significantly reduce the risk of death due to heart disease.
Diet and Hypertension

Diet is a crucial component of our hypertension reduction and prevention strategy. For many patients, particularly those with diabetes or pre-diabetes, diet is the fundamental focus, as correcting poor food choices is the easiest piece of the program to get a handle on. It may be difficult to remember to breathe and meditate when stressed, but choosing whole grain over white bread is a visual choice that is before your eyes.

For the purposes of lowering high blood pressure and not making it worse through your eating choices, the information presented in this section is broad based. That is, there is not a specific diet with necessary measurements or caloric requirements to remember. Instead, we take a look at foods that clinical trials have shown to cause hypertension (such as salt, fructose, high fructose corn syrup and sugar) and those shown to decrease hypertension (such as vitamin D, chili peppers and watermelon). We then take a look at and give an overview of the hypertension diet that is the most widely accepted and adopted by the leading health associations in the country.

Where food is concerned it is pretty clear-cut which ones need to be avoided and which should be center stage in your diet. By following these guidelines, your blood pressure will drop back to within normal ranges and eating will no longer be a cause of concern for your overall health.
Reduce Your Salt Consumption

Salt is the arch enemy of normal blood pressure. When we consume too much sodium, our body retains too much water. This increase in water retention increases our overall circulatory volume, which is the load our blood vessels must handle when doing their job. Just like lifting a heavier object increases the load on our arms and strains our muscles, this fluid load increases the strain on our heart and blood vessels. Increased strain and pressure cause hypertension.

When doing some additional research for this book I looked into dozens of studies and articles, from the academic to the more popular. I was amazed at how many Internet writers dismissed the role of salt in raising blood pressure, given the abundance of clinical trials that clearly point to a direct connection between the two. While we know why salt causes blood pressure to rise, it is only from recent studies that scientists understand how salt adversely affects blood pressure.

Scientists from the United States and Japan have uncovered the physiological process that explains how salt raises blood pressure. According to the study, available on the University of Maryland website, it has something to do with a hormone known as ouabain that is secreted by the adrenal gland. The information to the right is extracted from that study and explains the process in detail.¹⁹

Total sodium intake must be reduced to help reverse and prevent hypertension. The easiest way to begin reducing salt intake is to stop adding it as seasoning to foods after they have been prepared. In other words, some salt for cooking as usual but then no extra salt added at the table (or restaurant) once the food is served. Once you get used
Salt Study Discovery

The key to the newly identified physiological process is ouabain (pronounced wah-bane), a naturally occurring hormone secreted by the adrenal gland. Eating excess salt stimulates the secretion of too much ouabain. The hormone has a dramatic effect on two proteins that together, regulate the amount of sodium and calcium within the smooth muscle cells of the arteries.

The first protein, known as the Alpha-2 Sodium Pump, is responsible for removing excess sodium from artery cells. The second protein, called the Sodium-Calcium Exchanger, replaces sodium with calcium. The proteins, located in the cell membrane, work together to maintain a healthy balance of sodium and calcium inside the cell. Researchers in Baltimore and Ohio determined that the Alpha-2 Sodium Pump in artery muscle cells is the target of ouabain’s action.

Excess ouabain upsets the balance by disabling the Sodium Pump, causing sodium to accumulate in artery cells. The additional sodium causes the Sodium Calcium Exchanger protein to bring in too much calcium, which triggers artery constriction and hypertension. “The process that leads to high blood pressure is a vicious cycle,” says Mordecai P. Blaustein, M.D. “Too much sodium in the blood stimulates ouabain secretion. The ouabain interacts with the Sodium Pump, causing sodium and calcium to accumulate in the cells.”

to that reduction, then you can reduce the amount of salt you use while cooking or preparing foods. What’s more, simply choosing “low salt” versions of your favorite snacks, like pretzels or chips, is another fast way to reduce
salt consumption right away without completely changing your eating habits all at once... which is often the cause of failure of most diets.

**Limit Your Intake of Fructose**

Fructose is a simple sugar, or monosaccharide, that is derived from fruits and vegetables. In doses that are naturally consumed while eating unprocessed whole fruits and vegetables, fructose is safe for your body. However, in high doses like those found in processed foods and beverages, fructose has been linked to increased blood pressure. In fact, a new study finds that a diet high in fructose increases the risk of hypertension or high blood pressure.

Over the last century, processed food purveyors have begun adding more simple sugars to their products in an effort to add flavor. During this period the number of Americans suffering from high blood pressure has skyrocketed.

A study presented at the American Society of Nephrology’s 42nd Annual Meeting found that the rate of obesity has increased sharply since the development of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and that the prevalence of HFCS in processed foods may have something to do with it. It’s been reported that Americans now consume 30 percent more fructose than they did 20 years ago.

The study showed that a diet of more than 74 grams of fructose a day led to dramatic increases in risk of hypertension for those with slightly higher blood pressure. Participants who had a blood pressure level of 160/100 had an 87 percent higher risk of developing hypertension.

The adverse is also true. Wherein consuming more
According to research presented at a recent American Heart Association conference, premenopausal women who have insufficient vitamin D levels have an elevated risk of developing high blood pressure.

In their work, researchers followed 559 Caucasian women with an average age of 38 between the years of 1992 to 2007. They found that premenopausal women with vitamin D deficiency at the beginning of the study had the risk of developing systolic hypertension 15 years later that was three times higher than in other groups.

Flojaune C. Griffin, the study’s author, says the study differs from other research in this field because of its longer time span.

Vitamin D has long been known to be crucial for bone health, but recent studies have also linked a deficiency of the vitamin to decreased immunity and higher risk for some cancers.

Foods like milk, fish and eggs, as well as cod liver oil, are good sources of vitamin D, but it can also be found in nutritional supplements.

The vitamin is moreover produced in the body after exposure to the sun and experts say as little as 10 minutes a day are enough to prevent deficiencies.
fructose can raise blood pressure, reducing its consumption has also been clinically proven to lower blood pressure. Results of a recent University of Colorado at Denver study suggest that hypertensive individuals may be able to naturally lower their blood pressure by consuming a diet low in added fructose.

For the current study, lead author Diana Jalal, M.D., and her colleagues from the university’s Health Sciences Center recruited nearly 4,600 adults over the age of 18 and had them fill out dietary questionnaires regarding their average daily consumption of processed fruit juices, soft drinks, bakery products and candy.

After taking into account other risk factors the researchers found that individuals who consumed more than 72 grams of fructose each day were between 26 percent and 77 percent (depending upon the blood pressure threshold) more likely to be hypertensive than those who eat few foods containing added sugar.

As part of your program for reducing and preventing high blood pressure it is important to avoid consuming foods high in fructose and high fructose corn syrup. While it is best to read the labels of foods before buying or consuming them, here is a list of foods that are generally found to be high in fructose:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast Cereals</th>
<th>Processed Baked Goods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Snacks and Juices</td>
<td>Canned Soups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepackaged Sauces</td>
<td>Prepackaged Gravies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed Cookies</td>
<td>Variety of Sweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet Beverages</td>
<td>Processed Baked Goods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consume Fewer Soft Drinks

Individuals who are looking to lower their blood pressure without taking medication may be able to do so by moderately reducing their intake of sugar-sweetened beverages, according to a new study.

For the 18-month study, which was published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*, a research team from the Louisiana State University Health Science Center recruited 810 adults with early stage hypertension who drank an average of 11 ounces of sugary beverages each day, well below the American average of 23 daily ounces.20

At the end of the study, participants who reduced their soft drink intake by at least half lowered their systolic blood pressure by an average of 1.8 points and their diastolic blood pressure by 1.1 points.

“We found a direct dose-response relationship,” said study leader Liwei Chen. “Individually, it was not a big reduction. But population-wise, reducing total consumption could have a huge impact.”

According to background information included in the report, a three-point reduction in blood pressure can lower heart disease mortality risk by as much as 5 percent.

The correlation between lower blood pressure and reduced soft drink intake remained after accounting for weight loss and other risk factors. If ever there were more reason to stop drinking soft drinks than weight loss and chemical toxins, the ability to lower blood pressure by avoiding them is it!
STUDY: Chili Pepper Ingredient May Have Blood Pressure-Lowering Effects


Hypertensive individuals who are looking for a natural way to lower their blood pressure may want to consider eating chili peppers on a regular basis—if they can handle the heat.

Using an animal model a group of Chinese researchers found that the long-term consumption of capsaicin—the active ingredient in chili peppers—can help the body naturally produce nitric oxide, a molecule known to help prevent blood vessel inflammation and dysfunction.

Although this study is not the first to investigate the link between capsaicin intake and reduced blood pressure, it is the only one to examine the ingredient’s long-term effects.

Lead investigator Zhiming Zhu and his colleagues from the Third Military Medical University in Chongqing, China believe that the findings are also supported by local epidemiological evidence.

Referencing other studies, Zhu noted that hypertension rates in Northern China are approximately 20 percent, compared to 10 percent to 14 percent in the southern part of the country.

“People in these regions like to eat hot and spicy foods with a lot of chili peppers,” said Zhu.

Previous research has also suggested that chili peppers can help obese individuals naturally speed up their metabolism, allowing them to lose weight faster.
Enjoy Watermelon, or Take Its Extract

A new study published in the *American Journal of Hypertension* suggests that watermelon may be a factor in combating hypertension.21 Arturo Figueroa, the study’s lead investigator, said that the research team discovered that watermelon, “may prevent prehypertension from progression to full-blown hypertension, a major risk factor for heart attacks and strokes.”

For the study, the scientists used an amino acid, L-citrulline, which they extracted from watermelons. This extract was administered every day for six weeks to nine patients with high blood pressure.

As a result, all of the participants were able to lower their blood pressure. Arterial function was also improved in these individuals. Meanwhile, none of the subjects reported experiencing any side effects after taking the extract.

The researchers noted that watermelon also provides other nutrients, including vitamins A, B6, C and a powerful antioxidant known as lycopene. In turn, this may lead to improving the symptoms of other diseases. Figueroa added that individuals who have been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes could also benefit from either watermelon extracts or this food in its natural form.

Gotta Love the Garlic

Garlic has been hailed for centuries as an effective medicinal herb. Its benefits include boosting immunity, curing E.coli, reducing infections, scaring away vampires and lowering blood pressure. Kidding aside, garlic has been shown clinically to promote and support heart and
blood health in those suffering from heart-related problems including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, coronary heart disease, heart attack and atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries).

In fact, research indicates that in people with hypertension, garlic is able to reduce their blood pressure by as much as 8 percent. Interestingly, it is also found to lower blood pressure in people whose blood pressure is within normal ranges.\textsuperscript{22}

**Get More Potassium**

The updated Dietary Guidelines for Americans that was released in 2005 shined a spotlight on potassium and its role in reducing blood pressure. The benefit of potassium on blood pressure was confirmed by the Third National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey (NHANES III).

Published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* in February 2001, data on more than 17,000 adults indicated that adequate potassium intake from fruits and vegetables can lower blood pressure. Results showed that a diet with eight and a half daily servings of fruits and vegetables (providing 4,100 mg of potassium) lowered blood pressure by 7.2/2.8 mm/Hg (systolic/diastolic) in people diagnosed with high blood pressure, compared to a diet providing only three and a half servings of fruits and vegetables (providing 1,700 mg of potassium).\textsuperscript{23}

Potassium is readily available in healthful foods, including the following:
Increase Your Magnesium Intake

Magnesium is essential to the proper functioning of hundreds of biochemical reactions in the body. These functions include promoting bone health, nerve and muscle function, the maintenance of steady heart rhythm, regulation of blood sugar, immune system support and the maintenance of normal blood pressure levels. Approximately 60 percent of the magnesium in our body is found in our bones, while 39 percent is in our cells and a mere 1 percent in our blood.

While hundreds of clinical studies espouse the need for magnesium, almost 70 percent of Americans do not get enough in their daily diet. The recommended daily allowance (RDA) is between 300 mg/day and 400 mg/day. However, dieticians recommend nearly twice that number. Either way, it seems American women are only consuming 200 mg/day and American men only 250 mg/day.

But consumption of too little magnesium is only half the issue. Our common diet, which is high in fat, suppresses the body’s natural ability to absorb magnesium. And insufficient magnesium consumption, or adequate consumption with poor absorption, can raise cholesterol, which leads to high blood pressure. However, since magnesium is utilized in the production of the vasodilator prostaglandin E1, it helps blood vessels
relax and widen, allowing a more free flow of blood and lowering blood pressure.

By reducing your overall fat consumption and increasing your consumption of magnesium rich food sources, you can begin lowering high blood pressure and working toward its prevention. Magnesium is readily available in healthful foods, including the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Beans</th>
<th>Lima Beans</th>
<th>Soy Milk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw Broccoli</td>
<td>Nuts</td>
<td>Peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
<td>Squash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halibut</td>
<td>Whole Grains</td>
<td>Rockfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scallops</td>
<td>Okra</td>
<td>Oysters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Adopt the DASH Diet Plan**

Diet fads come and go with each passing year. Some are based on solid research and some are based on gimmicks. The problems with most diets is that they are either unrealistic in their caloric restriction or, because they are only concerned with weight loss they are not altogether healthy. But there is one dietary program that is different because it is easy to follow, healthy, provides lots of tasty options and it is proven to reverse hypertension.

An acronym for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, the DASH diet plan has been proven to reduce blood pressure in studies carried out by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Moreover, it was developed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services) and is endorsed by the American Heart Association.
In targeting hypertension, DASH is constructed around low salt consumption. More than that, it is extremely nutritionally dense and healthful. It endorses the consumption of fresh fruit, vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grain products, nuts, fish, poultry and foods rich in potassium, magnesium and calcium. At the same time, it espouses reducing the intake of foods that are high in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol, sweets and red meat.

Like any diet, for DASH to be optimally effective one must consume daily serving amounts from each of the food groups allowed while reducing salt, fat and sugar consumption over time. Basic tenets of DASH suggest beginning by adding servings of vegetables to your lunch and dinner and eating fruit between meals while at the same time reducing the use of butter, margarine and salad dressings while consuming low-fat dairy three times per day. Meat is limited to six ounces per day, while snacks are confined to unsalted pretzels, nuts, graham crackers, fat-free yogurt, popcorn and raw vegetables.

There are so many terrific things about this diet, the least of which, for our purposes here, is that it proves in clinical studies to reduce high blood pressure in as little as two weeks. I suggest you take a few moments and get better acquainted with DASH by visiting their website at www.DashDiet.org.
Natural Supplements and Herbal Remedies

This section provides an idea of what natural supplements and herbal remedies are available to assist in lowering blood pressure. While these supplements are all natural and safe, they have much the same result as prescription drug therapy. That is, they temporarily reduce blood pressure and, to be effective over time, they need to be taken continually. In other words, like with prescriptions, once you stop taking these supplements their effects diminish and unless you have changed your lifestyle the hypertension will surely return.

That said, as a method to begin getting a handle on the blood pressure issue and doing so with natural ingredients while making healthy lifestyle choices, supplementation and herbal remedies provide good support.

Taking nutraceuticals, or nutritional supplements, is fairly straightforward. They are safe if taken in the prescribed dosages, are easily found in most drugstores and larger retail outlets and can be taken by anyone. Chinese herbal patent medicines and homeopathic remedies, on the other hand, are made to address specific sets of signs and symptoms being experienced along with hypertension. Thus, more care should be taken when selecting the right remedy with attention to detail on accompanying symptoms.
Natural Supplements

There are supplements for just about every health condition. Yet it is always best to get your nutrients in their natural whole state in the form of food. In Chapter 6 we discussed the role of diet as part of a hypertension program. There we listed potassium, magnesium and garlic. These also come in supplement form and could have been included in this section. However, those are best consumed in their food states. Here we offer two supplements that are okay to take as supplements as well as eaten in food.

COD LIVER OIL—Containing vitamins A, D, E and omega-3 fatty acids, cod liver oil plays a vital role in human health. It assists in lowering cholesterol, reducing inflammation, enhancing memory, improving thyroid function, reducing asthma, improving glucose response, increasing cardiovascular health and benefiting intestinal disorders such as Crohn’s disease, irritable bowel syndrome and colitis.

Cod liver oil has also shown benefits for those suffering with hypertension. The vitamin D contained in cod liver oil assists in the absorption of calcium and magnesium, which are necessary components of good blood pressure health. Moreover, the omega-3 component helps lower cholesterol.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS—Fat is not necessarily a bad word. In fact, there is an entire family of fat that is beloved by healthcare professionals because it is healthy for you. These fats are not only healthy, they are essential for your body. They are known as omega, or the omega-3 fatty acids.

Omega-3s are the good-for-you unsaturated fatty acids comprised of the polyunsaturated trio of a-linolenic acid (ALA), eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic
acid (DHA). EPA and DHA have both been awarded “qualified health claim” status by the Food and Drug Administration.

In the 1970s, researchers studied the diets of the Eskimos of Greenland and it was discovered that two of the 3 omegas (EPA and DHA) were essential to heart health. These fatty acids were ingested in large doses via the Eskimos’ seafood-rich diet. Moreover, they showed almost no cardiovascular disease as these omega-3 fatty acids naturally reduce triglycerides and arterial plaque while reducing heart rate and maintaining healthy blood pressure.

Sources of omega-3 fatty acids include ocean-raised salmon, herring and mackerel, cod liver oil, olive oil, borage oil and flaxseed oil. Try making these a part of every meal and see how their benefits assist your natural blood pressure lowering program.

**Chinese Herbal Patent Medicines**

Chinese herbs are a main feature of traditional Chinese medicine. There are many ways to take Chinese herbals. These include in raw and cooked forms, as powders, in liquids and pills. Perhaps the most common way of taking Chinese herbs in the West is in the form known as the Patent Herbal Formulas. These are prepackaged herbal formulas that have been found effective for specific syndromes. They are bottles of small, BB-like pills that are coated in licorice and taken three per day, on average. Below are four patent formulas used in the treatment of hypertension.

**Yang Yin Jiang Ya Wan**—This formula contains antihypertensive, sedative and calmative properties. Designed specifically for hypertension, this formula contains several herbs with well-documented antihypertensive actions. The
Natural Ways to Reverse and Prevent Hypertension

formula is best for treating high blood pressure in those who are also experiencing the following symptoms: Headache, dizziness, tinnitus, transient ischemic attacks, anger outbursts and sore eyes.

As Yang Yin Jiang Ya Wan is a formula and not a single herb, it consists of the following: Polygonatum multiflorum (he shou wu), cassia tora (jue ming zi, cassia seed), paeonia lactiflora (bai shao, white peony), poria cocos (fu ling, hoelen), eucommia ulmoides (du zhong, eucommia), alimsa orientale (ze xia, alisma), achyranthes bidentata (niu xi, achyranthes), bedendrobium nobile (shi hu, dendrobium), uncaria rhynchophylla (gout eng, gambir) and extracts equivalent to dry: Zea mays (yu mi xu, corn silk), polygonatum sibirica (yuan zhi, polygala) and chrysanthemum sinesis (ju hua, chrysanthemum flower).

Tian Ma Gou Teng Wan—This formula contains antihypertensive, sedative and calmative properties. This formula is best for treating high blood pressure in those who are also experiencing the symptoms of headaches on the sides or top of the head, neck and shoulder stiffness, dizziness, vertigo, facial flushing, irritability, insomnia and visual disturbances.

As Tian Ma Gou Teng Wan is a formula and not a single herb, it consists of the following: Viscum coloratum (sang ji sheng, vaecium), calcium sulfate (substitute for conch shell, shi jue ming), uncaria rhynchophylla (gout eng, gambir), polygonatum multiflorum (ye jiao teng, polygonatum stem), poria cocos (fu ling, hoelen), achyranthes bidentata (niu xi, achyranthes), leonurus sibirica (yi mu becoa, motherwort), gastrodia elata (tian ma, gastrodia), gardenia florida (shan zhi zi, gardenia) and eucommia ulmoides (du zhong, eucommia).
Tian Ma Wan—This formula contains antihypertensive, sedative and calmative properties. This formula is best for treating mild cases of high blood pressure in those who are also experiencing the symptoms of stiffness in the neck and shoulder.

As Tian Ma Wan is a formula and not a single herb, it consists of the following: Rehmannia glutinosa (sheng di, raw rehmannia), angelica polymorpha (dang gui, Chinese angelica), notopterygium incisum (qiang huo, notopterygium), eucommia ulmoides (du zhong, eucommia), gastrodia elata (tian ma, gastrodia), achyranthes bidentata (niu xi, achyranthes), Scrophularia ningpoensis (xuan shen, Scrophularia), dioscorea hypoglauca (bei xie, fish poison yam), angelica pubescens (du huo) and cyperus rotundus (xiang fu, cyperus).

Zhen Gan Xi Feng Wan—This formula contains antihypertensive, sedative and calmative properties. This formula is best for treating high blood pressure in those who are also experiencing symptoms of dizziness and vertigo, temporal and vertical headache, visual disturbances, tinnitus, facial flushing, tremors, disturbances of consciousness and hypertension.

Homeopathic Remedies

Homeopathy was developed along the philosophical idea that “like treats like.” In other words, it involves treating a patient’s symptoms with the smallest level of a substance that would cause a healthy person to develop the same symptom. Yet, in a person with that very health concern, the body begins building its immunity to it and fighting its symptoms.

Homeopathic remedies have been made into formulas that are generally taken in liquid form or sublingually.
Below are three remedies shown to help with hypertension.

**Aurum metallicum**—This remedy is most suited to those with high blood pressure who are considered Type-A personalities. That is, they tend to be serious and focused on career and accomplishment. It is also for those who experience the symptoms of worry, depression, stress, anger and a tendency toward craving sweets, alcohol and simple carbohydrates.

**Calcarea carbonica**—This remedy is best suited to those with high blood pressure who have low energy, lack stamina, are easily tired and gain weight easily. Such people also tend to be responsible yet feel overwhelmed when feeling under the weather. Moreover, it is for those who also experience the signs of heart palpitations, belabored breathing, chills, clammy extremities and sweaty forehead during sleep and have a tendency toward craving sweets and eggs.

**Nux vomica**—This remedy is best suited for those with high blood pressure who tend to be driven and impatient and are easily offended, angered or frustrated. It is also for those who also experience heart palpitations, tight chest, constipation and hemorrhoids and have a tendency to be sensitive toward smells, noise and light.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

When taking supplements of any kind, it is best to discuss them with your doctor to look into possible contraindication with medication you may be taking. Moreover, it is best to get a solid recommendation from a healthcare professional and to only take the amount prescribed on the product packaging.
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