

health advice

Ask the EXPERTS

From lasers to tai chi, our experts answer your questions



DR MICHAEL LAN
is a doctor of Chinese medicine, and a tai chi and Qigong master.

EXERCISE AND DEPRESSION

Q *Can tai chi help with my depression?*

Yes, it can. Regular tai chi exercise and its focused breathing positively impact your mood and state of mind by restoring balance to the body's internal chemical state.

Tai chi helps relieve negative stress and remove toxins from our organs, such as the liver and the spleen.

It involves bringing in fresh oxygen. This oxygen that we bring to the brain and to other parts of our body, flows through our system.

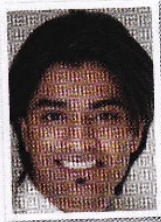
This brings new light and strength to the unused parts of the body and mind where depression hides.

Balance, strength and suppleness in body and mind are corrected and aligned through this.

Your heart rate is raised and nonadrenaline excretion in urine is increased, while salivary cortisol is decreased.

Concentration between your physiological and emotional states is achieved and balanced is maintained.

Tai chi is also beneficial in helping to treat many other chronic medical conditions.



DR KAMLEN PILLAY
is the medical director of Wembley Medispa in Cape Town, and a member of the World Society of Anti-Aging Medicine.

LASER EDUCATION

Q *What are lasers?*

The use of light as a medical treatment has grown. There are now devices which deliver different types of light for an ever-increasing number of uses. Exposure to certain kinds of light often makes people feel better!

Laser technology has developed over the last few decades to treat patients with a variety of skin problems, including the effects of sun damage, the removal of body hair, and recently, the treatment of psoriasis and acne.

Lasers are also commonly used by ophthalmologists for the treatment of eye conditions.

Since the early '90s, lasers have become the high-tech equivalent of dermabrasion or deep chemical peels for skin resurfacing.

Laser skin resurfacing declined in popularity due to the development of less aggressive light treatments aimed at skin rejuvenation.

Figures from the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, which has just started to track statistics for fractional laser skin resurfacing treatments, indicate that in 2010 just over 102 000 treatments were performed.



DR KAREN KOCH
is a GP and medical writer with a special interest in helping people translate complex medical concepts into their everyday life.

PACKAGE INSERTS

Q *What do I need to know about medicine package inserts?*

While most of us trust our doctors and pharmacists to guide us regarding prescription medicines and over-the-counter products, it is vital that consumers take charge of their health and safety by learning to decode the jargon in medicine package inserts.

Carefully review the package insert before taking your first dose. If you are confused about any of the facts, the side-effects or special precautions, ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain this information.

Never follow package insert instructions that contradict what your doctor has told you.

The insert will contain several sections, including the name of the product, how it works, who can and cannot take it, dosage directions and special precautions.

Some active ingredients can have harmful side-effects. Always look for, or ask your doctor for, products which have undergone clinical trials and do not have adverse reactions.

Finally, check that your medication does not interact with any other medication that you may be taking.

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