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# BENDING WITH THE BREEZE

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*Integrative Strategies for Wellness Across the Seasons*



## INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE AT HENNEPIN HEALTHCARE

*The Person-Centered and Culturally-Inspired Division of Integrative Health at Hennepin Healthcare is grounded in a multi-disciplinary team dedicated to partnering with patients, community, and each other to nurture healing, uncover root causes of illness, and offer whole-person, customized care to cultivate well-being for everyone.*

## RELISHING THE SUNSHINE

*Integrative Physical Therapist Jennifer Moore muses on how to slow down, breathe, and celebrate the natural beauty of the summer!*

After the long cold winter, we've just lived through, we are all looking forward to summer in Minnesota, and it feels like this year we have truly earned it! This is that sacred patch of time where we aren't putting on heavy jackets, lugging around extra layers, we can walk without fear of slipping on ice and relax our shoulders. This is definitely a time of more freedom and ease. Life is sprouting all around us and it is so exciting! As we finally head into the season, and the frenzy of activity it can bring, let's savor the gifts of summer and mindfully stay present for it.

A growing body of research supports that spending time nature is profoundly healing to our minds and bodies. The act of going outside, or simply watching a bird outside your window, triggers a cascade of positives including lowering blood pressure, changing brain waves to improve attention and mood, decreasing stress responses, and boosting our immune systems. Studies show that the amount of outdoor time that leads to the most benefit is 2 hours a week, and it does not matter if those hours are done all at once or broken up. We are all made of minerals, water, and elements shared with plants, trees, animals, and stones. This similarity allows us to resonate with all other beings on earth, as a small part of a larger and complex web of life. Summer is a wonderful time to

mindfully strengthen those connections and take care of ourselves at the same time. It's a perfect time to engage all the senses to experience the visual beauty of the season, smell the flowers, listen to songbirds, feel the warmth of the sun and touch the earth. Nature is good medicine!

There are also multiple studies that support the crucial benefits of slow diaphragmatic breathing. The world we live in is urging us to continually go faster, and we can often lose sight of the world around us, and ourselves, if we do not consciously down. Slowing the breath is a simple, easy tool to help us do that, any time and anywhere. It is optimal to work at breathing through the nose as nasal breathing allows normal resting of the tongue at the roof of the mouth with the face relaxed and the teeth apart. The nose then filters the air (so we can smell the roses!) and triggers the release of nitric oxide, an essential molecule that improves oxygen exchange into the blood stream. A slow, gentle, quiet breath helps calm and balance nervous system responses, enhances immunity, improves heart rate variability (which allows your heart to switch gears for better resilience and flexibility) and helps us cultivate awareness. The practice of slow breathing while spending time outdoors provides an even more magnified restorative boost. Let's get outside, breathe slowly and celebrate the natural beauty of summer!

***See next page for some of Jenn's Mindful Summer Walking Tips!***

## 5-min Peach Frozen Yogurt

### Ingredients:

- 1 (16-oz) bag of frozen peaches or 4 cups of fresh peaches, frozen solid
- 3 Tbsp agave nectar or honey
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt (non-fat or whole, if using Greek yogurt you may have to add a little water for the right consistency)
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice



### Instructions:

- Add all ingredients to the bowl of a food processor and process until creamy, about 5 min
- Serve immediately or store in the freezer in an airtight container for up to 1 month

# SUMMER OFFERINGS

## Classes

*Gentle Yoga for Cancer Care* - Every Tues 2-3pm (in-person or zoom)

*Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)* - contact [mindfulness@hcmcd.org](mailto:mindfulness@hcmcd.org) for details (zoom)

## Group Medical Visits

*Continuing with Restoring Health* - monthly drop-in, 1st or 2nd Mon of the month 5:45-7:45pm (zoom)

*Tame your Pain* - Tuesdays 1:15-3:15pm, 6/14-6/19 (zoom)

*Blood Sugar Balance* - Thurs 6/16-8/18 (zoom)

## Community Events

*Walk with a Doc* -Community walks for everyone on **6/18, 7/9, 8/6** from **10-11am** at the **Mpls Sculpture Garden Park** (meet at the Cowles Pavilion) OR if the weather is bad, at the **Mpls Institute of Art** (main lobby)

*Heals on Wheels* - community events on **holistic strategies for chronic pain management** at various locations, email [catherine.justice@hcmcd.org](mailto:catherine.justice@hcmcd.org) for more information

*Mid-day Mindfulness Practice Breaks* - Thursdays 12-12:30 (zoom)

**For More Info on all Spring Offerings, Go To:**

[www.hennepinhealthcare.org/specialty/integrative-health/](http://www.hennepinhealthcare.org/specialty/integrative-health/)

## MINDFUL WALKING

1. Feel the earth under your feet and attune to it. Listen to the sounds of your feet walking on the earth.
2. Be aware of your mechanics of walking, the sequence of how each foot makes contact with the ground, landing on the outer heel and then pushing off with the great toe. Walk lightly as though you are “kissing the earth”. Feel the related movements of the rest of the body, through your torso as you softly swing your arms and lift your heart to shine it forward.
3. Listen to the sounds and sights of nature, the birds in the trees and the wind in the leaves. Smell the flowers and the pines. Notice and connect.
4. Listen to your body by slowing your breath down. Breathe to remain present to yourself and these precious days of summer ... so they don't fly by too fast!
5. Do this over and over this the summer to cultivate healing and deepen the mind - body - nature connection.



## PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

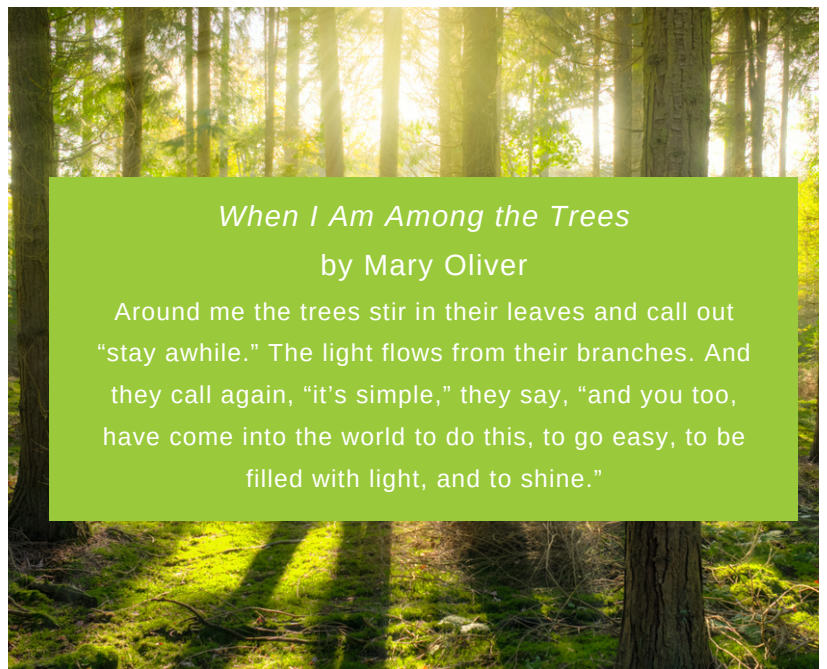
*Get to know Meril Mani, DPT*

**What is your specialty?** Integrative Physical Therapy

**What do you love most about your job?** Exploring human connections with people who I likely would have never had the opportunity to cross paths with. It teaches me patience, perspective, and a lot about myself in relation to others.

**What do you most enjoy about the summer?** Finding a good batch of peaches at the supermarket that I can enjoy in my hammock as I listen to a podcast and people watch (it's not comforting when they catch me watching though!)

**What is a healthy pleasure of yours?** Exploring art - I recently started my second series of pottery classes and it has been a humbling experience! It has taught me a lot about control and acceptance.



*When I Am Among the Trees*

by Mary Oliver

Around me the trees stir in their leaves and call out “stay awhile.” The light flows from their branches. And they call again, “it’s simple,” they say, “and you too, have come into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled with light, and to shine.”