

Live Life Naturally

The ongoing pandemic has reiterated the importance of the need to live naturally, respecting nature has come back to the forefront. The virus has changed lives all over the world, done away with everything that we had always considered 'normal', and is sending out a strong message that we must adopt holistic living in all aspects of our life. **By Bindu Gopal Rao**



Sudipta Mondal is a holistic fitness coach and a sustainable living practitioner. She started her journey as a vegan about two years ago and gave up on materialistic aspects of living to adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle. Not only does Sudipta eat clean, she

also does not use chemicals on her body or in her house, including using market made soaps, shampoos, detergents, toothpastes and home cleaners. She prepares her own bio enzymes, only wears cotton and believes in recycling everything that she

owns. "I was born and brought up in a small town called Sindri in Dhanbad, Jharkhand. Post graduation, I started working at Kingdom of Dreams as a dancer and did over 1200 shows, and then moved to Mumbai to pursue my dreams. I started with zumba, trained in

Pilates and yoga. I slowly realised that the industry is very fragmented and driven by fads that are not necessarily the best for your body. This is when I went back to my roots and adopted childhood practices of climbing trees, running and playing catch and throw, which became my style of training. The realisation that I was leading an unhealthy and stagnant lifestyle pushed me to make changes. I followed my mother's footsteps and first and foremost, changed my sleeping pattern – I started sleeping. I am at my happiest and healthiest today."

Organic Lifestyles

Eating organic is the first necessary step towards healthier living. Healthy organic, eating and local sourcing are the two core principles of Kitchen Garden, the first farm-to-table organic salad bar chain in Mumbai. "To make it possible, we partnered with Offerings Farms, an organic farm on the outskirts of Pune, where we now have our own plots of lands and greenhouses, supplying exclusively our restaurants. This partnership with a local farm had tremendous benefits for us; less transport and storage, meaning less waste and pollution, no intermediaries, as we're directly in touch with the farmers, better traceability, and fresher and tastier produce, harvested only when ripe, and according to seasons," avers Antonia Achahe, Head Chef and Partner, Kitchen Garden and Suzette. Likewise, Heyday was born with the idea of revolutionising the personal hygiene category in India with its safer, healthier and softer alternatives.



"Made from pure organic plant based fibres, Heyday sanitary napkins, party liners and our newly launched baby diapers provide a rash free, chemical free and super comfortable experience to the user, with the added benefit of safeguarding our environment from plastic waste. Heyday products are derived from corn and bamboo fibres, which are biodegradable and decompose within two years as opposed to 500 years in the case of plastic products," says Deepanjali Kanoria, Founder and CEO, Heyday. A tropical region for coconuts in

Karnataka, Anasikere in Hassan district has seen the birth of Tengin, a brand that was born with a desire to share the benefit of coconuts with the world. Tengin is a brand which makes and sells coconut-centric products involving farmers and women groups in villages. "Kalpavriksha or the coconut tree is the main source of income for villagers in our area and we worship it as well. We make use of every part of the coconut to prepare products aiding good health (coconut sugar, coconut honey), wellness (virgin coconut oil, vegan scented candles), sustainable products like bowls, cor dishwashing scrubber, which are now creating a circular economy and livelihood for the people in villages," says Madhu Kargund, Founder of Tengin.

Live Naturally

A connect with nature is essential for our wellbeing and a sense of happiness. To many, this manifests as a circle of concern about food, water security, lifestyle diseases, pollution and a longing for the simpler things in life. Some act on this need. A home in the hills, a place outside the city, all these are manifestations of this



craving to get closer to nature. "We fell in the same bracket of part-time farmers, trying to create our version of a haven for the weekend. However, we realised that running a farm goes well beyond the notions of romanticism. Most importantly, it is a full-time job. When we ran into almost a 100 friends and friends of friends who were going through the same thing, we knew that this was a latent need in society. That is when the idea of a collective was born. We wanted to create a platform where people with a desire to explore a sustainable life can take their first significant steps towards it. Our members actively participate in the discussions, initiatives and even physical work on the ground. We call our produce forest friendly produce. This means that the presence of that farm has helped the ecology of the place get better. It is not about allowing a few birds here and there," says Sunith Reddy, Co-Founder, Beforest.

Seeking Wellness

Today, perhaps the focus on wellness and health is at its peak. This is also why people are actively seeking wellness spaces to rejuvenate and take a break from the urban grind. Located in Kundli, Haryana, Naad Wellness is a 39-room wellness centre that features a bouquet of curated experiences that aim to heal and invite you towards holistic wellbeing. "We would encourage our guests to adapt themselves to 'Dinacharya' or the Ayurvedic concept of the ideal daily routine. Having a routine helps us be more efficient and positive, ensuring that the mind, body and spirit remain in balance. Keeping in perspective that most of our guests may not be able to get away for more than a couple of days, we are introducing a two-night package called Nirāmayā by Naad. This package will address health and lifestyle issues being faced by people now – immunity boosting and recovery from the symptoms of weeks of social distancing (insomnia, stress, irregular



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eating habits," says Manoj Khetan, Co-founder, Naad Wellness.

Likewise, Dharana at Shilim is an award-winning wellness retreat, set in the majestic Sahyadris. It is a one-of-its-kind eco-wellness retreat, offering a



sanctuary for the body, mind, and spirit. "In the post-pandemic world, mental health, spiritual wellbeing, and exercise will become the most important aspects of wellness. Mental health is of utmost importance and is the need of the hour. Exercise physiology such as body correction, posture correction, will become essential to bringing people back into their old routines. India is known to be the creator of concepts catering to overall wellness from Ayurveda, Yoga, and Siddha, to spirituality," says Srikanth Peri, General Manager, Dharana at Shilim.

Fitness Meets Diet

Eating a well-rounded balanced diet is essential to boost immunity and strengthen metabolic functions in the body. Dr. Shikha Mahajan, Holistic

Nutritionist and Founder, Diet Podium, opines, "Eating a well-rounded diet means getting all sorts of nutrients. A good way of ensuring this is to make sure that in a week, you consume all different colours of fruits and vegetables. Make sure that you have at least one source of carbs, protein and fat each at every meal. Eating different protein sources is essential for vegans, else they may lack in some vital proteins. Ensure you get vitamin B12 checked, as vegan sources don't provide it, and vegans tend to get deficient." Anvi Kaul, Nutritionist, Wellness Coach and Certified Diabetic Educator, Founder, Nutri Activiana, avers, "The food should be consumed preferably in smaller portions. To be precise, six small portions a day is ideal. Exercise regularly at home. You can do yoga, push-ups, planks, Pilates, skipping, and aerobics, which will make you stay in top shape while at home. Follow a good lifestyle. Avoid prolonged sitting and take small walks inside your home. Adequate sleep is essential. Remember that an inconsistent pattern of sleep is one of the reasons for gaining weight. Also, staying hydrated is vital for good health."

Find a fitness mantra that makes you happy, makes you feel positive and energetic. Even a regular, brisk walk around your home or building can do



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— K R Raghunath, Sr Chairman, Jindal Naturecure Institute

wonders for your circulation and energy levels. "At-home workouts and fitness routines can easily utilize basic props we find lying about our homes – use a set of water bottles as dumbbells, a



stool or step ladder for a glutes/calves routine, chairs for squats. If you have a demanding job and are seated at your laptop for hours, concentrate on basic stretches to keep your neck and back flexible and limber," says Sumaya Dalma, Fitness Expert and Entrepreneur, Owner and Curator – Sumaya Fitness at Ananda Spa, The Lodhi, New Delhi, and Quorum, Gurgaon.

Choose Wisely

In terms of the products you use in daily life, from cosmetics to essentials, there is a clear shift to choose local homegrown brands that produce conscientiously. Neemi Naturals was born out of a need to present the world with skincare that was rooted in nature but with the backing of the latest in science. "With the use of natural ingredients, essential oils, and with some products, even using age old techniques, we wanted to build the bridge between the old and the new. One of our bestsellers, the Turmeric Root and Olive Squalene Elixir, can be deemed a prime example, made from turmeric and a blend of other oils heavily propagated by Ayurveda, along with olive squalene, which is a vegan form of squalene, helping in keeping the formulation lighter and absorb more easily in the skin," says Bhaskara Seth, Co-founder, Neemi Naturals. Similarly,

Cover Story

Juicy Chemistry was born out of the idea that organic products are just as good as their synthetic alternatives. "We wanted to cut through all the greenwashing and present consumers and audience with products that are exactly what they claim to be. We believe that taking something that doesn't belong to us does not make sense. The concept of organic is to use ingredients grown without the use of any external elements. The only animal derived product we used is beeswax, which is ethically sourced," says Megha Asher, Co-founder, Juicy Chemistry.

Health First

Remember, there is no magic needed to build immunity. All we need to have is a proper balanced and nutritional diet, and regular exercise of at least 30-40 minutes every day. Apart from this, one needs to have a sound sleep of at least six to eight hours daily. Jindal Naturopathy Institute (JNI), established in 1978 by Dr Sitaram Jindal, has been the first of its kind to bring naturopathy and yoga together. K. R. Raghunath, Sr Chairman, Jindal Naturopathy Institute, opines, "Being mindful of your lifestyle and diet is the best way to boost your immunity, ensure good health and prevent chronic diseases. Preventive care needs to be in the forefront if we want to avoid rising susceptibilities to non-communicable diseases, which are currently responsible for over 61% of deaths in our country annually. By making modifications to your daily diet, following a strict exercise regimen, ensuring good sleep hygiene, and going



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for periodic non-invasive detoxification procedures, you can ensure that your body stays in the pink of health."

There are also new ways of staying healthy. Zyroopathy is a new Ayur

science, which is of the view that the human body is made from food, and only food can heal and repair it. Zyroopathy uses extracts from plants, fruits, vegetables and herbs, which are grown in a natural environment. Most of the produce we use, comes from the jungle, where there are no chances of any chemical contamination. "We are of the view that the human body contains the repairing agents, which is commonly termed as immunity. When these essentials are missing for a longer period from our body, they tend to convert in some form of diseases, adversely affecting the organs. To fulfil this deficiency, we give a combination of food supplements and zyro naturals, through which we try to eradicate the root cause of the disease, so that the person gets complete relief," says Kamayani Nanes, Founder, Zyroopathy.

While there is no quick end in sight to the ongoing pandemic, living simply and in sync with the elements of nature is crucial for maintaining optimal health. This is a great time to learn and unlearn, and people should invest in themselves and their health by adopting habits that are close to nature, as that is the only way to live a long, healthy life. After all, there are several lessons to be learnt from this pandemic to prevent the next. Take the first step to holistic wellness now, before it is too late.

