

The Art and Science of Kirtan Kriya

How to Meditate

*Perfect Health, Happiness, and Inner Peace
in 12 Minutes a Day*



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in 12 Minutes A Day*

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This Seal of Approval is granted only to those products that have undergone the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation's rigorous review and approval process, and which, in our estimation, support the education on brain health and longevity, and can contribute to the prevention of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

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Nothing in this book should be construed as medical advice. The author, publisher, its agents or affiliates make no claim to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. Always check with your physician or licensed health care practitioner before making any significant modifications in lifestyle or beginning any exercises outlined in this book, to ensure that these concepts are appropriate for your personal health condition and consistent with any medication you may be taking.

Dedication: This work is dedicated to Yogi Bhajan

1. The Return of The Turtle

I'd like to tell you about a dream I had. As I slept one night, my spiritual teacher, Yogi Bhajan, a true yoga master, came to me. He said, "Write a little book about how to meditate. People need it. Make it easy; eleven pages long. It will be a great service to humanity."

So, being a committed student, I followed my teacher's directive and started writing, with the sincere hope that you will read it and practice the simple technique explained here.

Do you want to know the lesson of this book? It's that you have to take action. You must do it. Simply set your intention, be present and goal directed. And do it daily. I'll show you how to take action fast, in a way that will give you the tremendous healing benefits of meditation in only one, 12-minute session a day. That's right. What I want to share with you in this booklet is a simple, quick and easy way to create great health, keep your memory sharp, and develop awesome levels of divine well-being, all of which will lead you to a state of inner peace that is so lacking in today's turbulent world.

Many people today are scatterbrained, frantic, unable to focus. The incredible amount of caffeine we consume is partly to blame. But mostly it's the relationships fostered by the internet and social media. Many leading scientists say that our brains are not ready to handle this over-stimulation. Some researchers have even identified a syndrome for the attention deficit caused by the internet. It's called digital dementia.

We are going way too fast and must slow down.

In order for you to thrive in the future, you need to meditate on a regular basis. Don't you want to heal, create perfect health, and keep your memory strong? Only meditation has been scientifically proven to work.

I am sure you remember that story about the tortoise and the hare. The hare ran fast, but lost the race. The tortoise went slow and steady and won. Regardless of your age or your health, the number-one thing you need to do right now is practice putting your wellbeing first and making it your top priority, before everything else. Because when you lose your health, you lose it all.

I call this *The Return of The Turtle*.

About five years ago I had some physical challenges and decided to put my health first. Based on my experience, I now know that when you do this, you find many obstacles blocking your path. It may be a struggle at times, but it must be done. The best way forward is to start every day in a positive way, what I like to call "wake up to wellness." And when time is an issue, as it may often be, please remember that all you'll need is 12 minutes a day to set yourself right and enjoy many positive benefits. Making *The Return of the Turtle* lifestyle your top priority will awaken your inner healing force, which places you on the path to a long and healthy life with a clear mind and a strong spirit.

2. Awaken The Force Within

As a physician with over forty years of experience, I can tell you that your body has an incredible ability to heal itself, if you give it a chance. Imagine that you've just cut your finger. What happens? First, you'll start to bleed and then you'll notice that the blood begins to coagulate. Next, you stop bleeding. At the same time, your immune system sends white blood cells to wall off the injury and cause an inflammatory response that actually protects the injury and prevents infection. And then what happens? Your body begins to heal itself and a scab forms. Eventually the scab falls off and you have a scar. Your inner healing force has been awakened.

Remember that almost all animals live out their natural, genetically allowable years, unless they're injured or killed by a predator. They get through natural life, and although they are subject to acute fight or flight stimuli, rarely develop chronic stress that causes their bodies to wear out too fast. Of course, animals don't have the rich, conscious awareness that we humans do. That is our blessing, but also an overwhelming strain. This stress is a primary cause of the accelerated aging I see in so many patients of mine these days. This stress can also lead to an early death. Along the way, we develop all kinds of bad diseases, such as ulcerative colitis, arthritis, anxiety, depression, heart disease, Alzheimer's, cancer, and many autoimmune diseases, such as lupus and fibromyalgia.

Often, during one of my presentations or seminars I'll ask people in the audience to define stress. Interestingly, they all have a different view. One person might say, "It's when I feel pressure." Another might say, "It's when I feel edgy or nervous, or it's when I have too much work to do and can't sleep." To awaken your inner healing force, you must first deal with the stress in your life.

When I first started this work back around 1990, I was very fortunate to come across a book called *Stress, The Aging Brain, and the Mechanism of Neuron Death* by Robert Sapolsky, Ph.D., of Stanford University. Dr. Sapolsky was then, and still is, an absolute deity in the field of neuroscience. I think the title of that book says it all: as you age, chronic stress kills your brain. You're also damaging your cells, and not sending very positive signals to your genes either.

The key point is that, through the release of the hormone cortisol from the adrenal gland, stress is toxic to your brain. This is especially seen in your hippocampus or memory center. Moreover, this toxic cortisol bath kills brain cells by the millions. The tragedy is that cortisol destroys the exact same brain cells that send messages back to the adrenal gland to stop its production. Ideally, the cells in the hippocampus send chemical signals back to the adrenal gland to shut off the production of cortisol. When these cells are killed off, however, fewer signals get back to the adrenal cortex to stop cortisol's release into your system. Thus the amount of cortisol is actually increased and kills more brain cells. This becomes a vicious cycle: more stress, more cortisol, more brain cell death, and accelerated brain and body aging. You simply get old too fast and die too young.

What we now know is that as you get older or become ill, your ability to handle stress is blunted. When you're young, you can brush it off quickly, because you have greater resilience, but as you age it takes its toll faster and hurts deeper.

The bottom line is not pretty and it's not just limited to your brain. Remember that your brain, mind, and body are connected by blood flow, energy and vibrations and chemical signals. So, just as your brain cells are exposed to cortisol, so are the other cells in your body.

One way stress ages you faster is because of its effect on what's known as a telomere. Telomeres are the cap of your DNA. Not unlike the way a sneaker shoelace has a plastic tip at the end, your DNA has a telomere. As the shoelace wears out, the tip of that lace gradually becomes frayed. In much the

same way, as you age, have stress, or develop inflammation, the end of your DNA, your telomere, becomes damaged. Your lifeline telomere thus shortens. Shorter telomeres equal worse health, accelerated aging, memory loss, and a shorter life.

There is a chemical that controls telomere shortening. It's an enzyme called telomerase. In general, anything that can increase your level of telomerase is good because it will lengthen your telomere, and that will be like a shot of some magical, anti-aging elixir. The meditation technique presented in this manual increases your telomerase by 43 percent, the largest amount ever recorded. This increase means your genes and cells are rejuvenated, so you can turn back the clock and, all things being equal, live a longer and healthier life because of it. That is very good news.

In my medical consultation practice, I was surprised that so many people who came to see me for various conditions had something in common. They all suffered from trauma as a child. This is a rarely discussed type of stress that can really make you sick. Unfortunately, psychological stress during childhood caused by neglect, physical abuse, alcoholism in the family, sexual abuse or family dynamic problems, including divorce or the loss of a parent, may lead to many health problems in adulthood.

The reason is because the stress chemicals that impact the youngster's brain lead to an inflammatory response in vital areas. This predisposes the person to depression, anxiety and early memory loss. Yet, what's worse, the psychological trauma caused by abuse leaves a gaping hole in the person's psyche that is difficult to fill.

This psycho-spiritual emptiness is the root cause of so many common and epidemic afflictions, as the traumatized person tries to fill that hollow feeling with food, drugs, alcohol, sex, cigarettes, over-work and other unhealthy behaviors. As you can imagine, these negative addictions may cause a person to develop all the leading interrelated epidemics of our time, from diabetes to Alzheimer's.

I'm sure that by now you're ready for some good news, and I have some. Working with many patients over the years, I've discovered something that heals. Further, as I'll soon show, you can create super high levels of health, happiness, and well-being. As we've seen, when it comes to childhood trauma, the old adage of "just get over it" is pointless. Without deep meditation, it's virtually impossible to soothe the injured brain. No anti-depressant can fill the void, although it may provide some temporary, artificial relief. What everyone needs is a way to change the anatomy and physiology of their brain. The technique shared in this manual does that most effectively, in what's called the "Fourth State."

3. The Supreme Status

In 1949, Swiss physiologist Walter Hess, PH.D. won the Nobel Prize in medicine for revealing two spots in the hypothalamus, a structure which is often called the brain's brain, because it sends messages to the pituitary, or master gland. What Dr. Hess discovered is that, by stimulating one area of the hypothalamus, he produced what is similar to the stress response. When the probe was moved over a bit, however, the exact opposite response ensued, creating an anti-stress response. In the former, the blood pressure, pulse and breathing rate went up. In the anti-stress response, the reverse occurred.

Now, let us fast forward to 1975, when a new cardiology researcher named Herbert Benson, M.D., was working at Harvard Medical School. At that time, Dr. Benson was trying to show that apes could be taught to control their blood pressure through flashing lights. He was not having much success. A younger scientist, Robert Keith Wallace, Ph.D. came to him and said, "Dr. Benson, why are you studying apes when you could study humans like me? I know how to lower my blood pressure naturally by simply sitting quietly and saying a word, called a mantra, to myself."

Dr. Benson was quite skeptical and declined to study Wallace. But fortunately for all of mankind, Dr. Wallace was persistent and continued to return, until finally Dr. Benson agreed to hook him up to electrodes and study him. Lo and behold, it was discovered that a human being could change his or her physiology at will and essentially reproduce Dr. Hess's anti-stress response by thinking a particular thought in a given way.

Further detailed studies showed that this anti-stress response could be produced by performing a number of simple steps. Dr. Benson called this the "Elicitation of the Relaxation Response." But first he identified what he called "The Four States": awake, sleep, dreaming, and the fourth state. The difference between the first three states and the fourth is that the first three happen spontaneously, while specific actions are required to enter into the fourth state.

Approximately 450 years before then, however, a great Master named Guru Arjan had referred to this very special self-healing state of being as "The Supreme Status." In this space, many wonderful things happen, including deep activation of your inner healing force. But beyond that, the supreme status conveys what the Guru called Brahm-Giani, or the state of Divine Wisdom or Divine Well-Being, which I'll describe later.

What Dr. Benson also did for us was to identify the four basic steps required to enter into the Fourth State.

1. **Comfort:** Sit easily in a chair or on the floor.
2. **Quiet:** Be alone in a spot where you will not be disturbed, i.e. no texting, emails, phones, etc.
3. **A Tool:** Focus on a word, thought, sound, your breath, or a short prayer.
4. **Attitude:** When other thoughts enter your mind (as they will), refocus on your tool, to the exclusion of everything else, for 10-20 minutes once or twice a day.

This is the basic, plain-vanilla, kindergarten approach to meditation. Yet, even this simple way of activating your natural healing force is quite effective. Recently, this original approach was modified to two steps: repetition of a word, sound, or movement; and the passive disregard of every day thoughts. Through four decades of research and practice, it has been shown that this simple technique positively influences many parts of our personal healing system, encompassing our brain, mind, and even our genes. The brain craves meditation; it's a natural event.

4. Your Greatest Treasure

The greatest treasure you have as a human being is your ability to touch your soul. When you do that by entering into the Fourth State, you turn on your natural healing force, become a better person, and reach down deep into your cells and your DNA. You send these structures a blast of positive energy and terrific signals to the deepest part of your being. Of course, you could choose not to activate your natural healing force. Any human can do that as well. In that case, unfortunately, you're a regular person living a stress-filled life, and perhaps suffering from accelerated aging, illness, and an early death.

Somehow, the ancient masters knew about brain function and chemicals we call hormones and neurotransmitters, which essentially orchestrate your total being. They called these peptides, and other chemicals Amrit, which means nectar. Another definition for Amrit is immortality, so by creating more positive chemicals, you may live a longer life. Of course, no one can live a physically immortal life, but you can touch your soul and be connected to the One True Immortal Essence of Reality, what all religions and many non-religious people call God, and merge with that infinite reality. Beyond that, when you touch your soul by practicing meditation, you also enjoy a deeper, richer, and more meaningful life. Moreover, as my work has revealed, you can also maintain a sharp brain as you age. You may also prevent and, in some cases, reverse memory loss as well.

So far, we've discussed the most basic form of meditation. There are many types of simple meditation techniques, including the Transcendental Meditation technique or TM as originally taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, which uses a secret, silent, prescribed sound or mantra as its tool. There is also mindfulness meditation or Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), a Buddhist approach with the focus on the breath as its primary tool.

There has been a reasonable amount of research on these techniques. However, they are both expensive, time consuming, and perhaps impractical for many people. That's why I prescribe something called Kirtan Kriya (KK), a meditation technique we've been researching and utilizing clinically for over two decades with excellent results. KK is from the Kundalini Yoga tradition as taught by Yogi Bhajan, Ph.D. Kirtan means singing and kriya means exercise complete in itself. So KK is a complete, brain-enhancing meditation exercise that is fast, easy, and essentially free. We also call KK The Mind Body Medical Treatment for Memory Loss and Alzheimer's Disease®.

Sometimes I am asked why I choose to study and specialize in KK. The answer is because I was directed to do so by Yogi Bhajan himself. That day, my wife and I were at his home in Espanola, New Mexico. He rose from his special, large, white chair from which he greeted his guests and students, and beckoned us to follow him into his private quarters. After a brief amount of time, during which he allowed us to ask him questions, he abruptly looked at us and said, "I'm teaching you this, so you can share it with people as they age." He then directed us to study KK and share the results with the world.

Since the inception of the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation (ARPF) in 1993, we have championed the integrative medical approach to the prevention of this terrible disease. This work has always included KK, which I wrote about in my groundbreaking books *Brain Longevity* and *Meditation as Medicine*. Since then, we have continued to practice, teach, and write about KK in other books, numerous medical articles, and works for both the general public and medical audiences.

In addition to the four basic steps described above, KK utilizes the following five specific actions:

- 1. Breath:** Although there are often very specific breath techniques used in yoga, such as breath of fire, the breathing in KK is allowed to come naturally as the meditation unfolds. The words for breath and spirit in many healing traditions of the East are similar. In fact, in yoga it is said that a person's age is determined not so much by chronology, but by the number of breaths taken. Each person is granted a specific number of breaths at birth, it's believed. Thus, if you are stressed out and breathe rapidly, you could die sooner than a person who breathes more slowly. Hence the ancient yogic saying: "a slower breath equals a longer life." As you practice, you'll find that your breathing rate will slow down. I always notice a deep sigh at about 3 minutes, which signifies the release of tension.
- 2. Posture:** You can sit comfortably with your spine straight in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Alternatively, you can sit in a comfortable, crossed-legged posture on the floor.

When you sit in this easy way, you send signals of relaxation to your inner being. In other yoga and meditation techniques, posture can be more complicated, but here it is quite simple. In those exercises, the posture may serve the function of channeling energy or blood flow throughout your body. In KK, the posture will help you stay relaxed as you move through the various parts of the meditation.

3. **Sound or Mantra:** Mantras are often called “The Music of Life” by yogis. KK prescribes very specific sounds: Saa Taa Naa Maa. The tune to which these sounds are sung is the first four notes of the familiar children’s song, *Mary had a little lamb*. Your jaw should remain relaxed as you sing, which activates the vagus or anti-stress nerve and thus turns on your relaxation response. This mantra is called the Panj Shabad, or the five primal sounds. From an esoteric point of view, it describes the eternal cycle of our existence: birth, life, death, and infinity, or your soul.

When you repeat the mantra, you stimulate the 84 acupuncture meridian points located on the roof of the mouth. When your tongue forcefully strikes these points, it sends energy through the meridians, or energy channels, just as inserting an acupuncture needle influences the energy flowing through acupuncture meridians. When this occurs on the roof of the mouth, it stimulates the pituitary and hypothalamus, which boosts the function of your neurological and endocrine systems. When we did a survey and asked people what they liked most about KK, 90 percent said the singing. After all, music soothes the savage beast.

The subtle benefits of the mantra:

- *Saa* evokes a sense of expansiveness
- *Taa* creates a feeling of strength
- *Naa* stimulates a sense of the universal
- *Maa* provides the quality of communication.

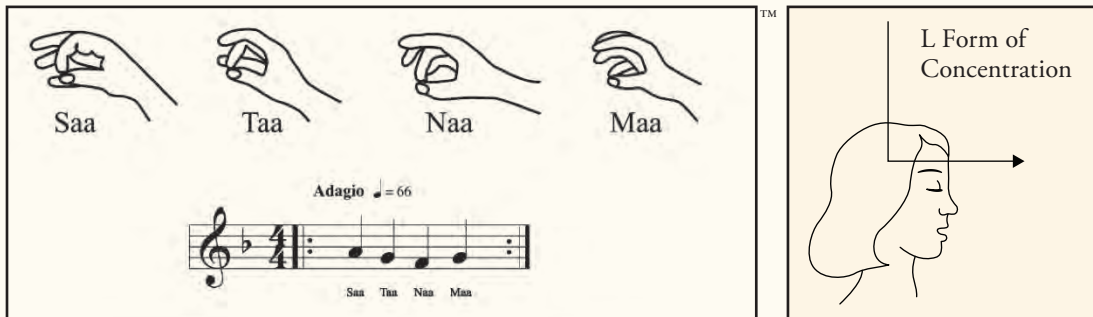
As you progress in your practice of KK, you’ll not only hear the sound, but you’ll also begin to absorb its vibrations. These vibrations travel through you, going to every cell of your body and relaying beautiful positive signals to your brain and glands, especially your master gland, the pituitary. This act optimizes the function of your overall health and anti-aging system. Using the mantra *Saa Taa Naa Maa* has many wonderful benefits and will take you to new levels of health, happiness, and spirituality.

4. **Finger movement or mudras:** For thousands of years, yogis have also used specific hand and finger positions as an important part of their practice. They called them the “Sacred Secret” and somehow knew that hand and finger positions and movements had a potent effect upon the brain, affecting creativity, action, memory, concentration, and thinking. Indeed, in the yogic scriptures, the mudra for memory and concentration, called Hakini mudra, is a combined gesture of the Smrti (memory) and Dharana (concentration) mudra. Hakini mudra involves touching all the finger tips at once. It should be easy to understand, therefore, why using the mudras of KK, which involves touching the finger tips in sequence, gives such a powerfully dynamic effect. Beyond that, the hands and finger tips are highly represented in the brain, revealing again why the combined effect of the finger touching and singing so strongly stimulates that organ, thereby increasing brain blood flow, which is visible in our imaging studies. After all, we are the only species that evolved to be able to speak and use our hands and fingers.

In KK, with the hands on the knees, the thumb is touched to each of the other four fingers in sequence. Both hands perform the same movement simultaneously. On Saa, touch the index finger to the thumb. On Taa, touch the middle finger to your thumb. On Naa, repeat the movements with your ring finger, and with Maa, use your pinky to touch your thumb. The sequence is always forward: thumb to index finger, middle finger, ring and pinky; never backwards.

5. **The Focus or Visualization:** The sound is visualized coming down from the top of the head and out through the middle of the forehead, lined up over your nose like a capital “L.” You may think of this action as sweeping through like a broom (see figure). It took a sophisticated imaging study that was carried out as part of our research at UCLA to truly appreciate how the visualization in KK acts. Using this focus activates the occipital or back part of the brain responsible for eyesight. But this stimulation not only enhances physical vision, it also allows you to access your highest vision or mission and purpose in life: your destiny. KK is, therefore, a highly evolved multisensory experience. Now you’re ready to do it. Here’s how:

1. For the first 2 minutes, sing out loud
2. For the next 2 minutes, sing in a stage whisper
3. For the next 4 minutes, silently say the sounds to yourself
4. For the next 2 minutes, sing in a stage whisper
5. For the last 2 minutes, sing out loud to complete the sequence.



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ABOVE: How To Do KK

Remember, when outside thoughts intrude, simply return your focus to the fingertips, sounds, and visualization. As you can see, KK is a mind/body exercise that engages and activates your conscious awareness. Moreover, as I'll reveal in the next section, the practice of KK even for just 12 minutes a day has many important benefits on your physical and mental health and your spirituality. I'm often asked how to time the exercise. A digital clock, timer, or watch can be used rather than any type of alarm. Using the available CD/MP3 makes timing your practice easier. To complete the meditation, inhale very deeply through your nose, stretch your hands above your head, and then bring them down slowly in a sweeping motion, as you exhale through your nose. Take a couple of deep nasal breaths before opening your eyes and resuming your activity.

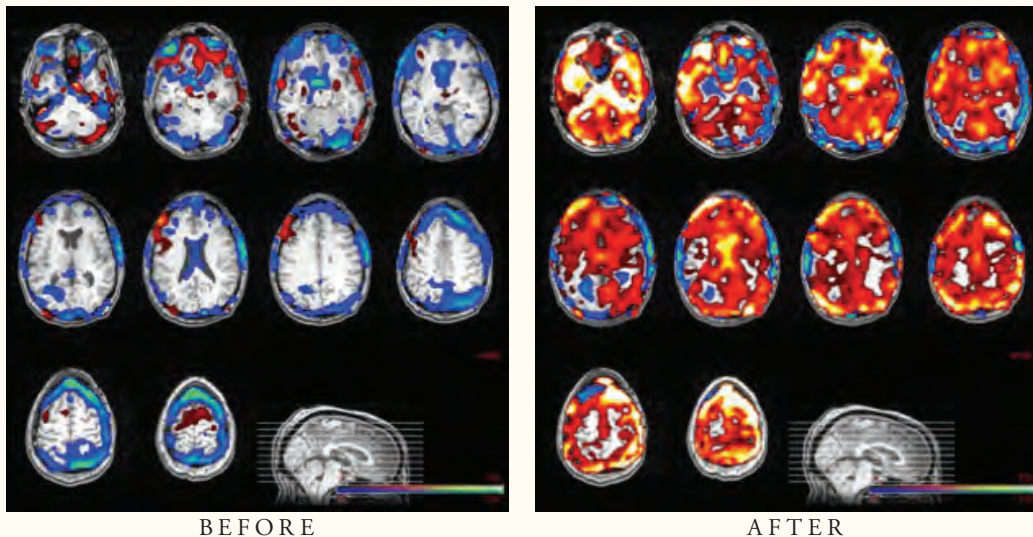
5. The Secrets of The Sages

The actual age and origin of KK is unknown. It certainly was passed down from master to student for generations until finally Yogi Bhajan brought it to the West, around 1970. I've often wondered how these ancient yogis knew so much, since there were no blood tests or scans available to them. They were certainly tuned in, is all I can say. Our research performed at important medical schools including UCLA, University of West Virginia and University of Pennsylvania that has been published in prestigious medical journals, including *The Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, has revealed some very astounding and significant results, which I will outline here. If you'd like to know more in detail please go to the website www.alzheimersprevention.org/research where you'll be able to discover all our research results; please also see the References section at the end.

Here is a review chart of the proven benefits of KK:

• Reduces Stress	• Decreases Anxiety And Depression
• Improves Sleep	• Improves Psychological Well-Being
• Reverses Memory Loss	• Enhances Neurotransmitter Function
• Increases Energy Levels	• Increases Blood Flow To Significant Brain Areas
• Upregulates Positive Genes	• Reduces Some Risk Factors For Alzheimer's Disease
• Increases Telomerase By 43%	• Down Regulates The Genes That Cause Inflammation

All of these positive changes are critically important, as they are risk factors for illness and memory loss. For example, disrupted sleep and lack of deep sleep is a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. Also recall that stress kills brain cells and KK reduces stress. KK brings with it enhanced immune system function by turning on good genes, while the decrease or down regulation of "bad genes," those that generate inflammation, is health-promoting. Bear in mind that every illness, from heart disease



A B O V E : MRI Scan Showing Increased Brain Blood Flow before and after KK

to cancer to Alzheimer's, has inflammation as a related cause. Additionally, a recent study published in a leading medical journal revealed that KK triggers the reduction of inflammatory biomarkers in the blood. This reduction in inflammation is clearly associated with a healthier and longer life.

The increase in brain blood flow to critically important areas translates into a healthier organ, one more easily able to fight off the insults of aging, stress, and poor life style choices. Also, regular practitioners of KK have bigger brains, which is significant, as aging usually causes this organ to actually shrink.

All of this proves that you are not a prisoner of your inherited DNA, even if it's less than optimal. The life you lead, including the right diet, supplements, yoga, KK, exercise and, as you'll now discover, the creation of high levels of what we call *Spiritual Fitness*, can change the direction of your genetic destiny and give you many more years of healthy longevity.

6. Divine Well-Being

One of the most interesting recent advances in integrative medicine is that healthy aging requires developing high levels of resilience, or the ability to bounce back from harmful events, such as illness, divorce, or the death of a loved one. This means more than just treating symptoms of a disease, the typical illness model still practiced by countless conventional physicians.

Books and articles in this burgeoning field have disclosed that, as you age, there are particular evolutionary attributes you can gain to help you grow as a person and develop high levels of mature wisdom. You can then share these new traits with your children, grandchildren, and society at large. If we can do this, then maybe we can help reduce the anger that is so prevalent among people of divergent opinion these days, and perhaps contribute in some small way to making this caffeine-driven, digitally-demented world a better place.

A great way to grow as a person is to develop what's called "well-being." There are many versions of this, including career well-being, social well-being, financial well-being, physical well-being, community well-being, psychological well-being, and spiritual well-being. What's remarkably important is to realize that all of these elements of well-being are interdependent; they are all woven together holistically.

At a conference on telomeres and well-being that I attended in Stockholm a few years ago, I asked a leading telomere expert the following question: "If you could eat peanuts and increase your well-being, would that be good?"

Well, she looked at me as if I had asked if the world was really round.

The response? "Dr. Dharma! You know meditation is the fastest way to well-being."

Yes, I knew that, but I just wanted to hear her say it on the record. What that means for you is that, beyond those positive medical changes that we've shared here, perhaps the most profound result of practicing KK has to do with the creation of *Spiritual Fitness*, the combination of all aspects of well-being taken together.

Once, a student asked Yogi Bhajan, "Sir, do those who meditate not get dementia?"

The master replied, "Not only don't they get dementia, they go into another dimension."

We are born perfect. However, as we "grow up" we are subjected to so many thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs that our own spiritual beauty becomes covered over—by external influences such as

parental views, stress, TV, education and so on, not unlike the layers of an onion. Our main purpose in life is to strip away the layers of that onion, transcend the nonsense to which we have been exposed, and rediscover our own true essence, our divine well-being. That is the dimension of which Yogi Bhaijan spoke, and that is where the practice of KK will take you.

Research now suggests that the healthiest people are the ones who grow with age and experience. It's also well-known now that Psychological Well-Being (PWB) leads to the type of energy and resilience that help us create a buffer against illness, depression, and cognitive decline. PWB includes acceptance of self and others, self-confidence, independence, personal growth, positive relationships, and having a purpose or mission in life, the latter of which conveys protection against Alzheimer's disease and increases your life expectancy by at least eight years. Spiritual Fitness interweaves all the other aspects of well-being with four new features that enable you to achieve peace of mind, be joyful, and bask in the light of Universal love.

1. **Patience** leads to persistence of regular healthy habits, including the practice of yoga and meditation. Patience also conveys personal empowerment and growth. Personal growth is about continual realization of your talents and higher potential, or living your dharma. This brings you unlimited bliss and abundance. Developing patience also allows you to slow down and enjoy life, because you're in the flow of the Universe so it works for and through you. Physically, patience is an intestinal healer, helping with issues such as irritable bowel syndrome.
2. **Awareness** brings self-acknowledgement, self-esteem, and self-appreciation. Naturally, when you see your true self without judgment, you can view others in the same way and look beyond their faults. This acceptance leads to gratitude and forgiveness, which releases anger, a devastating toxin to your brain, immunity, and genes. Awareness and acceptance are a naturally pure anti-depressant and anti-anxiety remedy.
3. **Compassion** is a strength and conveys kindness and empathy, which embolden healthier communication. Compassion also fosters clarity and commitment and the courage to be yourself without fear. You can then pass to the next level of spiritual fitness, which is surrender. Compassion is an excellent heart healer.
4. **"Surrender to the stretch"** is often said in yoga. In this case, the stretch of surrender is to your spirit; your soul. It also involves faith and trust in your higher power. When you surrender to your soul, you gain the strength to sacrifice and to serve or give to others without thought of reward for yourself. This is called *seva* in spiritual traditions of the East, and brings with it a true happiness and serenity, which conveys peace of mind.

Surrendering to the stretch in your life is a wonderful, overall anti-aging tonic. Perhaps the best one there is. It allows you to master yourself, your environment, and retain a strong sense of independence and interdependence. As George Harrison once sang in the song, *Within You and Without You* on the iconic 1967 Beatles album *Sargent Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, "When you look beyond yourself, you may find peace of mind is waiting there." Modern medical research confirms that *seva* improves our own health and well-being.

One patient of mine, a 49 year old attorney with severe chronic fatigue syndrome, illustrates this point very well. Alexandra had tried just about every type of medical program to help her recover. It was only when she surrendered to her spirit and started reading to disadvantaged children in her public library that she truly began to heal. Her story highlights the point that *Spiritual Fitness*, including *seva*, is a crucial part of creating the perfect health you seek.

7. And In The End

Obviously, I'm a huge Beatle fan. When asked what I majored in college, I often say quite truthfully, "The Beatles." The second to the final song on their last album, *Abbey Road*, is *The End*, in which Paul McCartney sings, "And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make." I think that sums up pretty well the concept of karma and also pinpoints what is really important in life, as does John Lennon singing, "All you need is love."

I recently lost a dear friend of 35 years to cancer. As the end grew near, we talked on the phone. The conversation was all about "I love you. I love you. Peace and love." Beyond the words, I felt a very strong energy in my forehead, where the third eye is located. All I can say is it felt like God. As I was talking to my friend, I had the realization that all of this other stuff we do in life is actually an illusion. It may even be insignificant. What really matters is the touch we bring to our soul and the love we give and receive. Peace of mind, or a deep, long lasting inner peace, so desperately needed during these times of turmoil, arises from the expression of your unique, loving potential.

Positive personal relationships are an integral part of that love. Sometimes, as happens on the path, people to whom we may be close impede our progress. Although it may prove difficult, implementing some distance therapy with those who don't support your quest for well-being may be in your best interest. Indeed, this act may often lead you to a greater level of success. Beyond that, meditating in a group of like-minded people, often called a *Sangat*, expands well-being and happiness. When you choose to connect with others you create resilience.

Purpose in life involves finding meaning and direction, especially when confronting challenges. Our true purpose in life, however, is to remove the layers of artificiality we have accumulated and recover our own divine selves. Our mission, therefore, is to start every day purifying our mind and bringing light to our soul. KK is an important key to that, and so we'd like to encourage you to practice it the first thing in the morning. We'd also like to suggest that you do it for forty days in a row. Why forty? Because that is the amount of time it takes to create a long-lasting, beneficial change in your brain, mind, and spirit.

I wish you well and hope that you are blessed to do KK each day. May all of your dreams be fulfilled and may you discover the boundless infinity within yourself.

May this world be blessed with peace!

Sat Nam.

Dr. Dharma

Dharma Singh Khalsa, M.D.



Dr. Dharma: The Return of the Turtle

About the Author

Dharma Singh Khalsa, M.D. has been practicing yoga and meditation for over forty years. An anesthesiologist by training, he began his work on Brain Longevity® in 1990. In 1993, he founded the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation (ARPF), which is the leading voice in the Integrative or Holistic Medical Approach to the prevention of Alzheimer's disease.

Dr. Dharma is Clinical Associate Professor, Division of General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, and Integrative Medicine at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. His books, articles and research have helped many people around the world learn to meditate, improve their brain, prevent and reverse memory loss, and enjoy divine well-being.

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Love and Blessings to you all.

Resources

1. Alzheimer's Research & Prevention Foundation. www.alzheimersprevention.org. Information on the 4 Pillars of Alzheimer's Prevention: Diet, Stress Management, Exercise and Spiritual Fitness. All our research and training programs can be discovered there. You can also order the Kirtan Kriya memory exercise CD/MP3.

2. *Resilience and Aging* by Helen Lavretsky, M.D., M.S. Professor of Psychiatry UCLA School of Medicine. A great book for those wishing to delve deeper.

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Founder and Executive Director of the Guru Ram Das Center for Medicine and Humanology

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