

# Healthier You

FEBRUARY 2015

HEALTH & FITNESS LIFESTYLE

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## INSIDE

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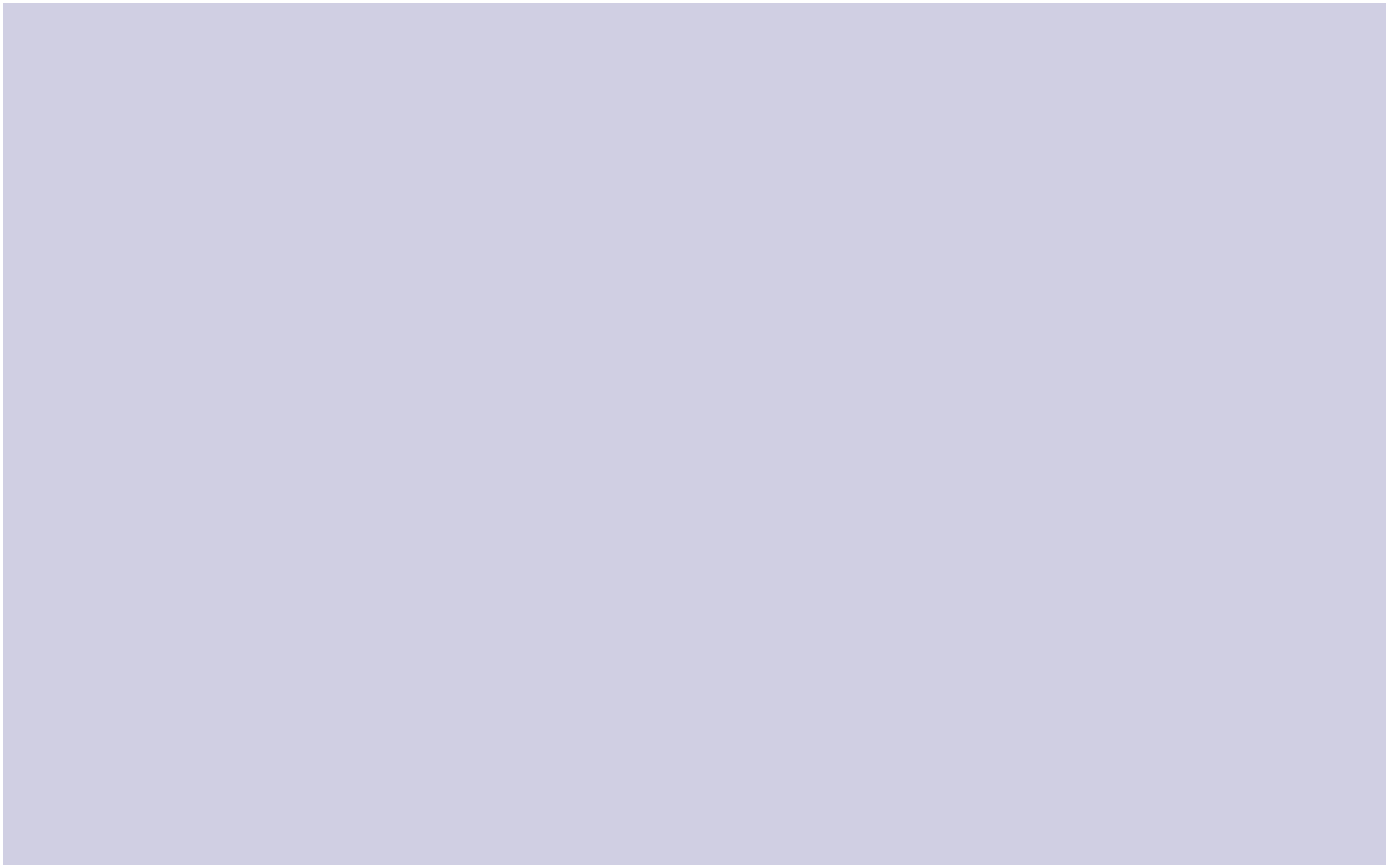
TRANSITIONING TO  
RETIREMENT LIVING

HEALTHY SKIN SECRETS

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LOCAL RAW & SUPERFOODS



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16

# INSIDE

- 4 Health information is an app away**  
Health apps are common, but not created equal.
- 8 Exercise leads to longer, healthier life**  
Keeping active should be a priority throughout all stages of life.
- 12 Superfoods are in reach for locals**  
Eating right can impact more than just your waistline.
- 16 Retirement can be a new adventure in life**  
Learn how to cope with changing focus.
- 18 Tech apps help stimulate your brain**  
These apps help keep your mind sharp.

- 20 Facial longevity methods are widely available**  
Beauty before age with these useful treatments.
- 22 Protection from sun key to healthy skin**  
Sunscreen is a simple step to maintaining skin health.
- 23 Many find living in the raw healthier**  
Local eateries offer raw food options.

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# Health information is an app away

Today, health information can be as close as your cellphone, but one health official advises to be careful on what to download.

By Melody Dareing



**"I find that every single mother has a cellphone and is using the Internet."**

"There's about a half a million apps in the Apple app store so it's really, really hard to filter out what's good and what is not good," said Eileen Bennewith, a registered dietitian who is the community nutritionist with Island Health, Public Health Program, Nanaimo Health Unit.

Bennewith said it took a while for the health app craze to take effect, but now it can be overwhelming for both patients and health officials to keep up with all of them. "It began very slowly. The problem is now there are just so many," she said.

Bennewith said more of her

clients are using health apps, which range from identifying childhood illness symptoms to meal planning.

"It's been more and more popular," Bennewith said. "I find that every single mother has a cellphone and is using the Internet."

Bennewith said there are some standard measures that a reliable app should meet. It should be based on Canadian health standards and from a reliable, official source, she said. "I always recommend to look for a Canadian source. That way the recommendations will meet Canadian standards," she said.

One of the key components to a good app is to check if it has the endorsement of a registered dietitian, she said.

Another important factor, according to Bennewith, is that the app be free. Legitimate apps sponsored by official health experts and government agencies are always free, she said. "There's a lot of sites out there who just want to make money," she said.

One sure way to get to a legitimate app is to see if a government site sponsors it with a .gov in the address, Bennewith said.

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**"If it focuses specifically on one food or food group, that's a red flag. They should talk about a balanced diet."**

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According to Bennewith there are some warning signs people can look out for when selecting food-related applications. One is to stay away from applications that are too focused on one particular food. "If it focuses specifically on one food or food group, that's a red flag. They should talk about a balanced diet," she said.

Bennewith said she also doesn't advise using diet applications. It would be best to use apps that focus on nutrition and healthy eating rather than weight loss, she said. "We tend to try to steer people away from the diet apps," Bennewith said.

There are several apps that have excellent general health information that people can read while waiting in offices and at other down times during the day, she said. Others are more practical and help people shop for the right foods or keep track of their exercise.

One place to find apps that Bennewith recommends is on [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca). Under the "your health" section, there is an app called the eaTracker that analyzes food and activity choices, recipes and helps with healthy meal planning. Another app is

called Nutri-eStep that helps parents pick healthy food choices for toddlers and preschoolers and also has tips on keeping children healthy and active. The Nutri-eScreen app is for older adults who want to know if they are making the right nutritional choices to stay healthy and active.

There are a number of apps on the site that help with shopping for healthy foods also. [Eatwise.ca](http://Eatwise.ca), which is also found on the dietitians' site, helps in planning for grocery shopping.

Bennewith highly recommends

**"I always recommend to look for a Canadian source."**

the app eaTipster, which was created by Dietitians of Canada, to promote healthy eating. The application has a new tip each day and users can save their favorites to refer to later and share with friends. The app also uses French, making it easy for all Canadians to use.

Families are using apps for a lot of meal planning. That is particularly true of busy households that want a quick, nutritious dinner, but have no idea what to cook. A good app can help busy parents with handling children's snacking also, she said. "It can give you all kinds of healthy snacks, healthy meals, breakfast, lunch, din-

ner and munchies," Bennewith said.

Another one of Bennewith's favorites apps is at [www.shopping-sensebc.ca](http://www.shopping-sensebc.ca). The website is great for families to get health information, but the app also takes participants on a virtual grocery shopping tour and shows them what to look for and what to avoid. "It's really very good for food safety as well as nutrition," Bennewith said.

With exercise applications, Bennewith said to stick to those attached to name brands or recognizable organizations like the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada or the Canadian Cardiovascular Society.

In fact, the Canadian Cardiovascular Society is now offering a free download where people can read the Canadian Journal of Cardiology on their mobile phone.

Bennewith said the company Nike also has a good app for runners, which calculates distance and pace.

Bennewith said those who use the right apps correctly will see a lot of benefit. The most important benefit is they track if you are reaching your nutritional and exercise goals. Still, it is up to the patient to make good lifestyle choices and implement health changes into their lives, she said. ■

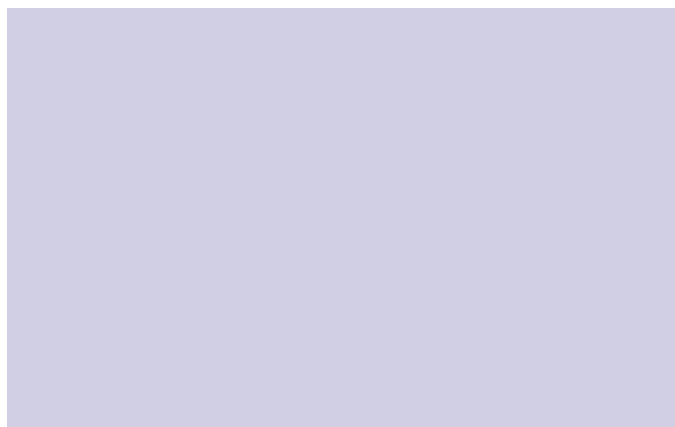
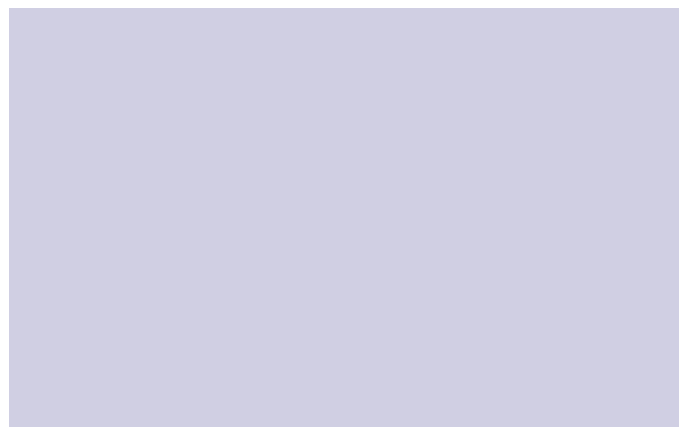
# Exercise leads to longer, healthier life

BY MELODY DAREING

**T**HERE'S NO DOUBT that exercise is good for you.

A 2012 study from the Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital and the National Cancer Institute shows that even a low amount of daily exer-

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cise, such as a casual walk, can increase one's lifespan by 1.8 years. A heavier dose of daily exercise, such as brisk walking, can add up to 4.5 years, according to the study.

Curtis Vizza, owner of Islands Optimal Health and Performance Center, in Nanaimo, said one of the secrets to exercising for life is to start now, no matter what your age.

"It's always good. It doesn't matter what age anyone starts. It's all health. If you start later, you'll see immediate benefit because you've

never done it before," Vizza said.

However, Vizza said incorporating exercise as a daily habit at a younger age will go a long way to increasing your lifespan.

"If you start younger, you'll be healthier longer," Vizza said.

One thing to remember anytime you exercise, especially if you are just beginning a routine is to avoid overusing your muscles. According to the Mayo Clinic, doing too much exercise when you aren't ready can cause overuse injuries. The best ad-

vice is to pace yourself into a routine.

These types of injuries occur more often in older people because they often don't realize the changes that occur in their bodies as they age. Those older than 50 should seek a doctor's advice before starting a new activity. Many doctors can offer exercises that target muscle weakness and protect other areas, like knees.

One of the most important things anyone can do to start exercising is get the right shoes. Shoes should be

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replaced regularly, usually around every 300 miles of walking or running, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Exercising is a challenge in a modern world where most people sit most of the time for work rather than work as farmers or manual tradesmen. Vizza said the ironic part is stressed out people usually drop exercise first and work at a sedentary job more, but sitting and working all the time can lead to more stress.

“When we work out or we go run or walk and we breathe some fresh air and get healthy, rich blood, oxidized blood to the brain, we think better. When we think better, everything makes more sense,” Vizza said.

That leads to better problem solving and a better day, which leads to less stress, he said.

He said exercise also helps internal organs because it increases blood flow and improves heart health.

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Vizza said exercise should be tailored to the individual to adjust for personal health issues and age-related challenges. For instance, Vizza said a younger person may be targeting strength while an older person may focus more on flexibility or specific muscle functions.

He said even those with physical limitations should exercise. An occupational therapist, physical therapist or chiropractor can assist with developing a plan, Vizza said.

“Everyone’s the same. We all need to move and shake a little bit,” he said.

He said those who don’t exercise will eventually lose muscle and other benefits of exercise, even if they worked out regularly when they’re younger. Vizza said that’s why it’s important to exercise throughout your life.

“You use it or lose it. If you do when you’re younger, you know how to do it when you’re older. If you stop doing things, it goes away,” he said. “Our body naturally wants to be at a certain place and we work hard to make it better so our bodies function better.”

While all exercise should include a routine for flexibility,

strength and cardio, the focus in your 20s is typically exercises like squats, weight training and push-ups for both men and women.

The 30s brings a slowdown in metabolism so exercise should include a routine geared to weight control and to avoid back pain. Exercises could include things like using a Swissball, running, riding a stationary bike and swimming.

The 40s brings some flexibility issues so people should include

more exercises that focus on extension, strength training and range-of-motion exercises. A good yoga workout accomplishes all of these things. Running and rowing are also excellent, according to experts.

Other exercises for your 40s include foam rolling, lateral squats, doorway stretches, elevated single-leg squats, and planks.

Those age 50 and older can use exercise to recharge the brain and even reverse aging in arteries, according to a 2008 study in the Journal of Applied Physiology. Muscle mass and osteoporosis can also become issues. Studies have also shown that weight resistance training can prevent osteoporosis and stop bone density loss. Exercise has also helped to reduce arthritic pain.

The best exercise for this age group is aerobic. Warm-up exercises should include lunges, front pull downs, pushups and planks. Cardio workouts should include running, rowing, bicycling and swimming. An alternative could also be dancing, stepping or other types of similar exercise. ■

**“You use it or lose it. If you do when you’re YOUNGER, you know how to do it when you’re older.”**





# **Superfoods are within reach of Nanaimo residents**

BY MELODY DAREING

**SUPERFOODS ARE  
THE SUPERHEROES OF  
HEALTH, AND MANY OF  
THEM ARE CLOSER AT  
HAND AND CHEAPER  
THAN YOU MAY THINK.**



**D**ona Bradley, director of the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition on Vancouver Island in Nanaimo, said many people think they must have the exotic superfoods like acai or goa to get health benefits. She said that simply isn't true.

While those have gained popularity because of links to longevity and disease-fighting components, Bradley said there are many in Vancouver that anyone can buy.

She said the school stresses locally grown superfoods like blueberries, blackberries and apples. They are high in nutrient density, high in antioxidants, help prevent disease and increase longevity, she said.

"They are less expensive. They are grown locally and are probably more of what our bodies need," she said.

Berries are plentiful in Vancouver and are some of the best things a person can eat.

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA HAS ANOTHER SUPERFOOD THAT IS HIGH IN PROTEIN: WILD-CAUGHT SALMON AND FISH.**

"Blueberries are amazing. Blackberries are incredible and they're free here and grow everywhere," she said.

Strawberries are good too, but Bradley said people should always buy organic strawberries because of

pesticide use in commercial ventures.

British Columbia has another superfood that is high in protein: wild-caught salmon and fish.

There are many other superfoods that are easily accessible, Bradley said. She said the key is to include variety. Kale, for instance, is an excellent superfood and helps ward off cancer, but broccoli also has cancer-fighting properties as well as calcium, which is good for bone health. Peas also have positive nutrients that can help with overall health, she said.

"We're thinking of foods that help us to prevent diseases," she said. "All of these foods have different properties and they all work on these kinds of things.

"If we eat a good variety of them,

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A close-up photograph of a wooden bowl filled with blueberries and blackberries. The bowl is made of light-colored wood and is filled with dark blue and black berries. The berries are resting on a wooden surface, and the background is blurred. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

LOCALLY GROWN SUPERFOODS  
LIKE **BLUEBERRIES** AND  
**BLACKBERRIES** ARE HIGH  
IN NUTRIENT DENSITY, HIGH  
IN ANTIOXIDANTS, HELP  
PREVENT DISEASE AND  
INCREASE LONGEVITY.

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we'll be sure to get the various vitamins and minerals."

Other superfoods include nuts. Bradley said walnuts are high in omega 3 and are good for brain health. Oats help calm the body. Tea, whether it's green, black, or red bush tea, has powerful antioxidants, she said.

"Yogurt's wonderful food, as long as it has a full component of fat and (is) natural with no sugar," Bradley said.

Tomatoes fight cancer, especially prostate cancer in men, according to Bradley.

Incorporating superfoods into meals doesn't have to be complex.

"I think it's a matter of people not complicating their diet, but eating simply, preparing their meals at home, cutting out sugar and refined products and including foods that

ward off diseases," she said.

Incorporating protein and fat is essential because people can't live totally on fruits and vegetables, Bradley said.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF EATING WELL IS TO FOCUS ON LOCALLY GROWN ITEMS MORE THAN ORGANIC ITEMS.

Protein and fat can also come from things like nuts. The right kind of fat comes from things like flax seed oil, flax seed, walnuts, almonds and other nuts.

"That has been underemphasized

for the past 50 years or so. Now we know we do need fat for the brain and for the heart," Bradley said.

Protein also keeps people satisfied and prevents them from craving sugar and refined carbohydrates, she said.

She said the most important part of eating well is to focus on locally grown items more than organic items. While many local farms aren't certified organic because of the expense of that, Bradley said their practices can be just as healthy.

"Locally grown foods from small, mixed farms are generally grown using organic practices," she said.

Bradley said people should ask a grower questions and understand how the food was produced.

"We tell our students the best thing is to know the grower," she said. ■



# Retirement can be a new adventure in life

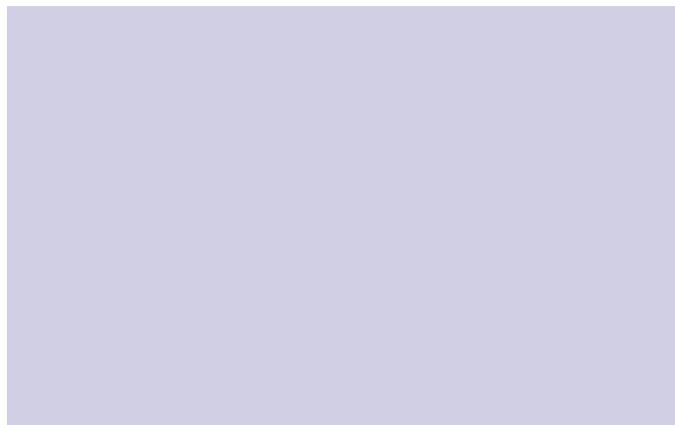
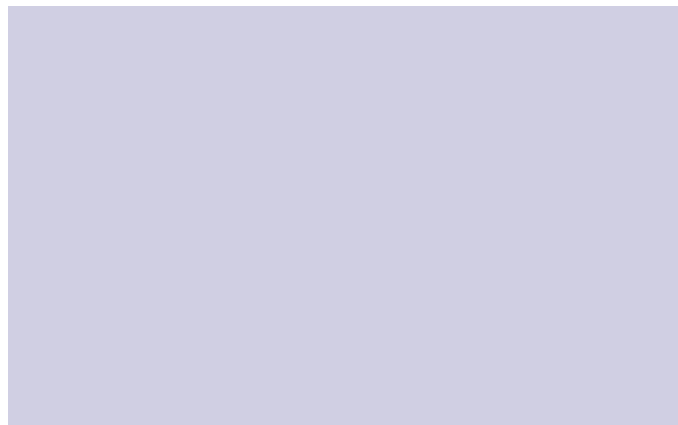
BY MELODY DAREING

**R**ETIREMENT HAS CHANGED and baby boomers should be aware of ways to make their golden years better, according to retirement transitional expert Barry LaValley.

LaValley, the head of Nanaimo research and ed-

ucation company The Retirement Lifestyle Center and the author of the book, “So You Think You’re Ready to Retire,” said the focus changes in retirement.

“The older we get the more we concentrate on





health and family,” LaValley said.

Canadian retirees don’t have to focus on paying for medical care because of the health care system, but they still have to consider how they want to live. That’s where post-retirement income becomes important, LaValley said.

He said many Canadians can retire on less than what they’ve been told, but often can’t retire on what they have coming into their accounts. The simplest way to figure out what you will need in retirement is by using a formula. “The income formula is to take what you think you need annually pre-tax and multiply it by 20,” he said.

There are some common trends among today’s retirees, LaValley said. The most common is the immediate spending after retirement. He said new retirees tend to spend a lot of money during the first three years of retirement. Usually it’s on things they’ve always wanted like a dream car, a vacation home and especially travel.

Then reality hits.

“Then they worry about it and they worry about what they have left,” LaValley said.

## **“THEY DON’T UNDERSTAND WHAT RETIREMENT IS. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY ARE RETIRING FROM, BUT DON’T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE RETIRING TO.”**

LaValley said the No. 1 issue with retirees is financial insecurity. They aren’t sure how they are going to live.

“They don’t understand what retirement is,” LaValley said. “They know what they are retiring from, but don’t know what they are retiring to.”

He said retirees need to plan so they can spend on things that make them happy, but also staying within their means. “You should spend to enjoy life,” he said.

LaValley said one thing that particularly the baby boomer generation needs to understand is that habits don’t suddenly change after retirement. Spending should be addressed

and managed and that is particularly true with credit card debt, he said.

“We tend to repeat the habits we had when we were younger, so we continue to spend and we continue to put things on our credit cards,” he said.

LaValley said that is leading to the trend of many retirees over the next 10 years still owing on a mortgage. That is not a positive trend, he said. Reducing and eliminating mortgage debt is one way to boost your income and your stress in retirement, he said.

Another trend is that adult children and their families are moving back in with older parents. LaValley said that has been growing in recent years as the economy has dipped and unemployment has risen.

That and the fact that people are living longer with reasonable good health is causing other demographic and lifestyle changes. LaValley said it is becoming more common for someone in their 60s to be watching both grandchildren living with them and their parents remaining in the home in their advanced years.

Another trend is would-be retirees continue working, either at their current job or retiring to take another job. LaValley said there are two pri-

— continues on page 19

# Tech apps help stimulate your brain

BY MELODY DAREING

**T**he brain needs to work out like the rest of your body and a good way to do that is with tech applications designed to tease your thinking, according to one expert.

Gary Anaka, a Vancouver Island native and a brain-based teaching facilitator and brain coach, said people should be learning their entire lives because that is what the brain is designed to do. The new apps available on phones and computers help with that, he said.

“Absolutely, definitely 100 percent yes,” Anaka said. “You must work your prefrontal cortex - the front of your brain - where you think,” he said.

Apps force that part of the brain to think, essentially giving it a workout, he said. He said since the brain is engineered to learn your entire life, it thrives on new challenges.

Stress is a problem for many people today and leads to eventual loss of brain function. Applications can also help reduce stress, which needs to be controlled, although Anaka said they aren’t the only solution.

“Apps may help but you have to move to survive and get the cortisol under control,” he said. “Huge



## APPS FOR A HEALTHY BRAIN

- **Lumosity, available for iOS and Android**
- **CogniFit Brain Fitness, available for iOS**
- **Brain Trainer Special, available for Android**
- **Fit Brains Trainer, available for iOS and Android**

inflammation caused by stress is a major factor for cognitive decline as we age,” he said.

Besides eliminating certain stresses in life, Anaka said, people should try to decrease inflammation with certain food elements like spices and coconut oil. He said it’s also important to move around to avoid “sitting disease.”

There are other things people can do to help increase brain function and

those things don’t involve applications.

People should include exercise in their routine, drink plenty of water, add omega 3 to their diet and participate in things that bring novelty and challenge to their lives. All of these things help the brain, Anaka said.

While gaming apps may help adults increase brain function, Anaka said, children should experience the world firsthand to stimulate their young minds.

“My personal answer is that children need to go outside and discover the world, avoid nature defect disorder and not let technology hijack their growing brains,” he said, adding that young people aren’t adjusting well once they start work. “Young digital brains are having problems in today’s workplace,” Anaka said.

Anaka has many other tips and advice about brain health on his Web page, [www.braincoach.ca](http://www.braincoach.ca), and in his book “Brain Wellness.” He also presents workshops designed to beat brain stress and using your brain on the job. ■

mary reasons for this. Some feel they need the income to maintain a lifestyle and others simply want to feel useful and productive. “If you’ve worked all your life and you get to retirement age and someone comes to you to saying it’s time to retire, when you don’t have that, how are you going to fill in the need to continue to do work?” he said.

He said no retiree should ever worry they will be bored. He said the first three months is an adjustment, but usually people find ways to stay busy after that. In fact, some retirees stay so busy that they tell him they wonder how they ever had enough time to work.

LaValley said one positive way to find fulfilling retirement is to volunteer. He said there is a thought that sometimes people need a break from leisure, and work, even volunteer

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work, provides a break and a purpose that leisure doesn’t fulfill. “It gets you into the community. It gives you a sense of achievement,” he said.

Many senior citizens are using retirement to complete their education or take additional classes, he said. That is particularly a huge trend in Canada. This is a time to try new things, he said. “You certainly want to do things to keep your mind active and engaged in life,” LaValley said.

He said an enemy of retirement is pessimism. Optimistic people tend to be in better health and have a better quality of life. LaValley said one of the most important things is to keep growing and achieving in retirement. The achievements may be different, but they help build confidence and self-worth, he said.

“The sense of self-worth comes from how we view ourselves,” he said.

Those are lessons anyone at any age can apply, he said. ■



# **Facial longevity methods are widely available**

PEOPLE TODAY HAVE MANY SKIN  
TREATMENT OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM,  
BUT SOME OF THE BEST WAYS TO PROTECT  
YOUR SKIN FROM AGE ARE SIMPLE HABITS  
THAT COST LITTLE.



**FINE LINES AND WRINKLES CAN BE TREATED WITH FRAXEL LASER AND DERMAL FILLERS AND NEUROTOXINS SUCH AS BOTOX AND DYSPORT.**

**T**he staff at Anbry Skin Solutions in Nanaimo said sunscreen is your best friend to prevent skin aging.

“Apply. Apply. Apply. The No. 1 thing to keep your skin looking great is quality professional strength skin care,” said Anne Brady, R.N., B.N., and owner of Angry Skin Solutions.

There is also one affordable way to keep your skin looking healthy, no matter what your age, she said: using a high-grade exfoliate.

“The best thing you can do to keep your skin looking healthy and glowing is exfoliate,” she said. “Keep your dead skin cells moving and expose new healthy skin to the surface.”

Many people are seeking more extensive methods for keeping their face looking great. Some of that is attributed to education, Brady said, and a big part of the trend toward things like Botox and facial fillers is because they are more affordable

and available than in years past.

“People are realizing that they have access to the treatments that many thought only celebrities in Hollywood were able to get,” Brady said.

The option people should choose is really individualized and based on the problem they are trying to resolve.

Skin dullness can be treated with microdermabrasion and chemical peels while brown spots and rosacea can be treated with lasers. Fine lines and wrinkles can be treated with fraxel laser and dermal fillers and neurotoxins such as Botox and Dysport. Skin laxity and deflation can be treated with dermal fillers and other types of treatments, according to Brady.

“Combination treatments utilizing laser, fillers and neurotoxins are becoming increasingly popular,” she said.

Right now, there is a lot of talk about machines that, in essence, melt the fat off your body.

Prices of the different options can be in the hundreds or thousands of dollars.

“Most people know the areas of their face that is concerning them, they need to have a consultation with a professional that knows about the many options available and what would be best for them,” she said.

Brady said if your doctor or skin care technician consults with you about a procedure, go home and research it on the Internet. Knowledge is important to get the right procedure for the right purpose, she said.

She said anyone considering facial procedures should also research the provider.

“Make sure the person you are seeing to have the procedure done has experience and is reputable. Many people just open up shop and start doing procedures with minimal training or buy a laser at discounted prices and do not receive training from the laser company,” she said. ■

# Protection from sun exposure key to healthy skin

BY MEGAN MATTINGLY-ARTHUR

## WARMER WEATHER IS ON THE

way and, with temperatures heating up, more and more people are gearing up to participate in outdoor sports and recreational activities. Protecting skin from the sun during such activities can help prevent dangerous skin cancers, as well as keep skin looking young and healthy.

Dr. Skinlaser's Dr. Julian Hancock, a medical and cosmetic dermatologist with more than 30 years of experience, recently stressed the importance of protecting skin from the sun and offered his best tips for doing so.

"(It's so important to protect skin from the sun) because excessive sun exposure is a major cause of skin cancer," Hancock said. "The damage to the skin DNA is cumulative; since people live a lot longer (and) have more sunshine holidays (and) hobbies than they used to, skin cancer is increasing rapidly."

While some skin cancers can kill — such as squamous cell carcinoma or melanoma — Hancock warns that even non-fatal skin cancers and conditions, like pre-cancerous keratoses, can require surgery that can be painful or disfiguring. Protecting skin from excessive sun exposure can also help combat the effects of aging.

"Most of the skin changes people attribute to 'aging' — wrinkles, skin

discoloration, etc. — are actually due to sun exposure," Hancock said.

To keep skin healthy and looking its best, Hancock recommends staying in the shade and out of the sun from noon to 3 p.m., when sunlight is the strongest, as well as planning outdoor activities for early or late in the day, when shadows are long. Wearing the proper clothing can also help protect skin from the sun; opt for long sleeves, long pants and a hat with a 4-inch brim that goes all the way around. Whenever possible, choose clothing that offers SPF protection.

Sunscreen is a great way to protect exposed skin. Use a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 during the winter months, and one with an SPF of 50 during the summer months or when vacationing in tropical destinations. People who are allergic to traditional sunscreens or concerned about their safety can opt for mineral-only zinc or titanium oxide creams.

"(E)ven if you have been reckless with sun exposure in the past, we now have more treatments than ever to not only reverse pre-cancerous skin cells, but also to reverse the cosmetic aspects of sun aging," Hancock said. "(It's) always best to visit a skin laser clinic with a properly-licensed specialist dermatologist in charge to ensure the best assessment, advice and treatment." ■

# Many find living in the raw healthier

BY MELODY DAREING

## RAW FOOD IS IN.

“We have quite a following here,” said Toni Jeffries, owner of raw food and juice bar Power House Living Foods, which has two locations in Nanaimo.

She said there are four or five raw food restaurants on the island, as well as several thriving juice bars.

Biff Bartlett, owner-manager of Rawmbus (508-6581 Aulds Road), said his family’s raw food restaurant is a “health fast food alternative.”

The reason for the surge of raw food in Vancouver is simple: It’s healthier.

“A lot of the food that’s raw helps to alkalize your body, leaving you body less acidic,” Bartlett said.

Less acid helps the body ward off chronic diseases like cancer and other ailments, he said.

Jeffries said people are becoming more educated about how food is produced and want a healthy alternative.

“They want to ensure that they’re getting highly nutrient-dense foods to fill their bodies and not just grabbing for snacks with empty calories,” she said.

Raw food can also be creative, the restaurant owners said.

Bartlett said his family’s restaurant tries to copy common foods that people see every day, so those who are not accustomed to eating raw foods are less imitated. Their menu, which he calls an introductory menu, consists of items like pizza and hamburgers.

The “meat” of the burgers is made

with mushrooms and nuts, he said.

“We use a lot of savory tastes in our recipes,” Bartlett said.

Those flavors are with items like almond butter and lemon juice, and Himalayan sea salt, he said. The foods are blended with nuts and buckwheat, which they sprout, Bartlett said.

Jeffries said there are new tools that her employees are using to be more creative. For instance, their “noodles” for salads are made from zucchini.

“A lot of people are starting to utilize these tools to make these [recipes] more creative,” Jeffries said.

Their customers couldn’t be happier.

“People are very thrilled,” Bartlett said. “I sample them a piece of our menu and they’re into it right away.” ■

