



Martial Arts: A family affair



Aromatherapy's healing benefits



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# 2010 NEW YEAR *new you.*





# Aromatherapy: More than a good smell

By Melissa Gilman

Scented bath, body and home products have become ubiquitous in America; even dish soap comes labeled as “lavender.” That’s fine if you want good smelling dishes. But not useful if you want to receive real healing benefits from lavender.

“Aromatherapy, in my language, is using essential oils to have medicinal effects without harmful effects,” said Melissa Farris, owner and formulator for Veriditas Botanicals based in Minneapolis.

Farris has been studying and working with pharmaceutical grade essential oils for nearly 20 years. She teaches classes internationally and recently educated a group of about 70 at Lakewinds Natural Foods. Locally, her products are carried by Lakewinds and Body Mind and Spirit in Chanhassen.

“People think aromatherapy is an emotional response to a smell ... But I tell them whether you like the smell or not it will still work,” Farris said.

For example, lavender might be a calming smell to some people, but its biological makeup is what really makes it outstanding – therapeutic or medicinal grade lavender can heal skin and kill harmful bacteria at the same time.

True medical grade aromatherapy involves using the volatile oil of the plant for its antimicrobial, antifungal and antibacterial characteristics.

Plants are steam-distilled to collect the oils that the plants secrete to protect and heal themselves.

“It’s essentially borrowing the plant’s immune system when we use essential oils,” Farris said.

Look for organic and therapeutic grade essential oils to ensure the best and safest healing properties. Beware of synthetic oils that are not safe to be used undiluted. However, even pure essential oils like cinnamon need to be used with caution.

According to Farris, peppermint oil can be used to open up the sinuses and to heal stomach upset. Lemon essential oil is an effective astringent and tea tree oil has great antimicrobial properties, making it perfect for healing acne and athlete’s foot.



Melissa Farris poses with lavender, a commonly-used essential oil.

## Common therapeutic uses for essential oils

Tea Tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*): Bacterial, fungal and viral infections

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*): Headaches, fever, nausea and fatigue

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*): Minor burns, insomnia, pain relief and wound care

Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*, *Eucalyptus radiata*, *Eucalyptus smithii*): Respiratory infections

Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*): Fungal infections

German chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*): Inflammatory skin problems

Source: *The Center for Spirituality & Healing at the University of Minnesota*

**Resources:**  
Veriditas Botanicals  
www.veriditasbotanicals.com

**The Center for Spirituality & Healing at the University of Minnesota** www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/aromatherapy

**Lakewinds Natural Foods**  
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**Body, Mind & Spirit**  
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# Go Nuts? Absolutely!

By Michelle Doepke RD LD

Looking for a new food to incorporate into your New Year, New You plan? Consider going “nuts!” Let’s break down the facts and learn how nuts are making a strong comeback into a healthy diet.

For simplicity of this article, the nuts reviewed will encompass the approved FDA health statement which reads “Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 oz per day of most nuts as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.” This statement was approved for seven types of

nuts: almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, some pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts.

Nourishing additions to a healthy diet, nuts contain at least some of the following healthy components: protein, fiber, phytochemicals, unsaturated fat, omega 3 fatty acids, plant sterols, L-arginine, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Much scientific evidence shows that eating nuts as part of a heart healthy diet reduces the risk of heart disease, lowering the LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol level in the blood, and reduces risk of developing blood clots that can cause a fatal heart attack.

Unsaturated fat found in nuts should replace saturated fats in your current diet for optimal health benefits. For example, decrease your portion of cheese or creamy dressing and add a few nuts to your salad, or choose a handful of nuts as your afternoon snack in place of a brownie or chips. Keep in mind, just adding nuts to your daily intake without cutting back on less healthy fats won’t provide the health benefits you are looking for.

The key with nuts is simply not to over-eat them as they are highly concentrated in both their calories and their nutrients, so you only need a small handful.

## Nutty specifics

**Hazelnuts** – Are one of the best nut sources of monounsaturated fat and are lowest in saturated fat. Just 15 hazelnuts provide a woman’s daily vitamin E requirement helping to protect cell walls from the free radical damage caused by pollution, stress and the sun.

**Almonds** – Are richer in calcium than any other nut and are also a good source of fiber, Vitamin E, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and iron.

**Walnuts** – Contain significantly higher amounts of omega 3 fatty acids when compared to other nuts and are rich in copper, manganese, iron and zinc as well as fiber and B vitamins.

**Pistachios** – Provide over 30 different vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients including lutein and zeaxanthin, two antioxidants associated with a reduced risk of age-related macular degeneration.

## How to go nuts

Nuts are very versatile, and can adapt to many meals and snacks.

**Add to Steamed Vegetables.** Toss pecans with steamed green beans or brussel sprouts in a bowl with a little olive oil and a seasoning blend. Include some toasted pine nuts with your sautéed spinach or roasted asparagus.

**Add Some Crunch to Your Mornings.** Add slivered almonds or crushed walnuts to any of your favorite hot cereals, yogurts, smoothies, or on your

spread for bagels.

**Entrée Additions.** Dredge your meat or fish first in a liquid base (such as lemon juice or olive oil and melted butter) and then cover it in chopped pecans. Use a few peanuts to top your stir-fry.

**Nutty Desserts.** Hazelnuts have a delicious flavor and aroma that’ll add a whole new element to your cookies or ice cream.

**The Perfect Spread.** After soaking walnuts in water for six to eight hours, chop them up in a food processor along with some parsley, onion, garlic, lemon juice and olive oil for a tasty spread to top whole-wheat crackers, pita or flat-bread.

**Naturally.** A handful of nuts on their own or in a trail mix are a healthy and easy way to snack. To help with portion control, divide your nuts into 1 ounce portions and store them in individual bags. This way, you can simply grab and go.

Bottom line, go nuts every day - Just keep it to a handful! For various recipes and additional ways to add nuts to your diet visit [www.nuthealth.org](http://www.nuthealth.org).

*Michelle Doepke is a registered and licensed dietician in the Nutrition/Diabetes Education Department at St Francis Regional Medical Center in Shakopee.*

“The key with nuts is simply not to over-eat them as they are highly concentrated in both their calories and their nutrients, so you only need a small handful.”

Michelle Doepke RD LD

# Meditating on the present moment

By Melissa Gilman

Kathleen Weinstein’s face reflects the glow from the light of a lotus-shaped candle as she demonstrates meditation positions against a wall awash in blue and illuminated by hanging stars.

“It’s like being held up by the saltwater of the ocean,” she said of the feeling she sometimes enters into while meditating.

The Oxford American Dictionary defines meditation this way: “[to] think deeply or focus one’s mind for a period of time, in silence or with the aid of chanting, for religious or spiritual purposes, or as a method of relaxation.”

Meditation takes many forms, depending on the religious or spiritual path it is derived from – such as Christian contemplative prayer, Buddhist vipassana or Muslim tafakkur or tadabbur.

Weinstein, the owner of Isis Yoga Studio in Savage, has been practicing yoga, a form of moving meditation, for 25 years, and seated meditation for nearly 20 years. She has personalized her meditation practice over many years and it has given

her the feeling of being held safely in the womb. It also makes her a better driver.

“I’m a much nicer and calmer person on days that I meditate. If I don’t meditate and someone cuts me off in traffic, well, the air will turn blue,” she said laughing.

“The goal of meditation is to come to a place of stillness within yourself.

My teacher used to say it was the stake that would stake the ‘puppy mind’ in place.” Weinstein said. “We have all this chatter that keeps going in our mind. Until you learn to calm the mind you can’t be in the present moment.”



Photo by Melissa Gilman

Kathleen Weinstein demonstrates a seated meditation pose at her studio in Savage.

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# Sweat and discipline:

## Martial arts' prime ingredients

By Kristin Holtz

They come in from the crisp December air carrying red and blue American Taekwondo Association duffle bags, calling "Hello, Sir" to their sensei.

On the dojo mat, they stretch and chit chat. Saturday is graduation day and most are hoping to advance to the green belt.

When Sensei Brad Magers signals the start, they are all at attention.

"It is more important that you're trying your best than you're doing perfect form," Magers advises.

### A great workout

Taekwondo and karate are the two most popular martial arts in the United States. They not only

teach self-defense, but offer health benefits for people at any age.

"It's holistic," said Nancy James, whose 12-year-old son Dylan studies at Magers ATA Blackbelt Academy in Jordan. "You get the physical benefits, the mental benefits, the whole body. I just think it's a wonderful thing for everybody."

As physical activity, martial arts have numerous health benefits. Students are constantly moving, which boosts cardiovascular health.

"It's a great workout. Students stay active throughout the class period," said T.J. Seifert, instructor and director at USA Karate in Chanhassen.

Karate also provides a sense of body awareness since it requires a high level of coordination, flexibility and strength, said Tony Rockwell, a sixth-degree black belt and owner of Metro Karate in

"Something changes in a person when they put the black belt on ... I really think that sense of accomplishment is big enough in someone's mind to continue pushing themselves beyond what they thought they were capable of doing."

Brad Magers

Eden Prairie and Chanhassen.

### Reaching goals

Karate is different than an aerobics class or going to the gym because it sets realistic goals, Rockwell said. "It's very structured. It allows you to earn a belt and move forward as you're training."

American Taekwondo Association's philosophy

allows students to move up in belts quickly. Magers believes short-term goals build confidence in students.

"Something changes in a person when they put the black belt on whether you're a 5-year-old or 55-year-old. I really think that sense of accomplishment is big enough in someone's mind to continue pushing themselves beyond what they

thought they were capable of doing," said Magers, a third-degree taekwondo black belt.

### Life skills

Martial arts also teach important life skills, like discipline, confidence, integrity, responsibility, compassion and humility through the formalities of class, instructors said.

Tracy Yates' three boys – Patrick, Tony and James – joined taekwondo in April. The Jordan resident likes that it's a year-round activity that has helped build her sons' self-esteem and responsibility in school so that they "just take pride in what they're doing."

Magers uses the expression "black belt attitude" to reflect the behavior and mentality he expects in all his students. Students can earn colored stripes for their belts for attitude outside the studio. Parents recommend Magers award – or sometimes take away – a stripe based on academic performance, willingness to do chores and respect toward mom and dad.

"It's not just about what happens on the dojo but your whole life and how they conduct themselves," said Nancy James of New Prague.

Martial arts can also be a good stress reliever after a bad day, said Seifert, a fourth-degree karate black belt. Karate and taekwondo force a person to focus on the positive instead of the negative.

"It helps you relax, keep in shape," said 14-year-old Reed Smith of Jordan. "It's really helpful in your life."

### Photos

Photos by Kristin Holtz

1. Students practice their taekwondo form at Magers ATA Blackbelt Academy in Jordan. Pictured are Patrick Yates, Michael Quiroz, Tony Yates, Dylan James and James Yates.

2. Reed Smith of Jordan practices his board-breaking kicks at Magers ATA Blackbelt Academy in Jordan. Smith is testing for his red/black belt.

3. Brad Magers, owner of Magers ATA Blackbelt Academy in Jordan, explains the proper way to hit during a class. Taekwondo and karate are self-defense combat techniques that offer physical, mental and emotional benefits.

4. James Yates, 13, of Jordan practices his nunchaku skills with his brother, Tony, 11, behind him. The camo belts were preparing to test for their green belts.

### The Hard Facts About Sour Candies

Source: Minnesota Dental Association, [www.mndental.org/public\\_home](http://www.mndental.org/public_home)

In the past 20 years, candies marketed to children have increasingly been of a "fruity" or "sour" variety

- Sour candies are very acidic, with a low pH level.
- Some candy is so acidic it can actually burn gums and cheeks.
- Acid weakens and wears away tooth enamel.
- Teeth without protective enamel are prone to tooth decay.
- Each acid attack lasts about 20 minutes.
- Holding the acid in your mouth by prolonged candy sucking or chewing continues the acid attack.

### How to protect your teeth

- Reduce or eliminate consumption of sour candies.
- Don't suck or chew sour candies for long periods of time.
- Chew sugar-free gum to produce saliva which protects tooth enamel.
- After eating sour candy or other acidic foods or drinks, wait one hour before brushing teeth. Brushing right away increase the harmful effects of acid on teeth.
- Ask your dentist about ways to reduce sensitivity or minimize enamel loss if erosion has begun.
- Use fluoride toothpaste and a soft toothbrush to protect your teeth.

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# Making their point

Acupuncturists tout the healing benefits of their work

Eden Prairie resident Kristianne Seelye is in her first year of practicing acupuncture. An avid sports fan, she wants to eventually use her skills to help professional athletes cope with their injuries.

Photos by Stuart Sudak

By Stuart Sudak

The tranquil music soothes. So, too, does the heated treatment table.

Still, trepidation builds. Needles have a way of doing this.

Staring at the ceiling, I nervously brace myself for Eden Prairie acupuncturist Kristianne Seelye to insert the tools of her trade into my hands, legs and feet. Seelye offered this treatment as a way to ease my left knee aching from miles on the treadmill.

I scrunch my eyes as she pops the first needle into my hand. There is a tiny bit of a pinch ... but not much else.

"How are you doing?" Seelye asked.

"That was it?" I said with a sigh of relief. "Not bad at all."

## Fighting pain

This is the sort of reaction Seelye and other acupuncturists savor.

The needles, touted as offering an array of physical and psychological benefits, can often be their own worst enemy in the court of public opinion among acupuncture novices.

"Many people don't understand what it is," Seelye said. "All they hear is needle."

"Acupuncture seems odd to some people," admitted Prior Lake acupuncturist Marcia Kirk. "It doesn't make sense why a needle in your arm would help your foot. It's a different kind of thinking."

So, let's start with the question many wonder: Does it hurt?



Seelye pierces her own skin to show how an acupuncture needle is inserted. "We (people) do have our own innate way of healing," she said. "I tell my patients that I do 20 percent of the work and you do 80 percent."

The hair-thin, flexible needles aim to take away pain, not give it. Kirk said people compare the sensation of it being inserted to a mosquito bite.

"It differs from person to person, and some needle locations have more sensations," she said. "Sometimes you can put a needle in and the person won't even feel it."

Seelye said the needles should not hurt when they pierce the skin, but patients might feel something when the needles are brought to the correct depth.

"Some of the sensations are dull, achy, itchy ... sometimes you might have an electric sensation like a zing and that should go away," said Seelye,

whose practice is called Seelye Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine. "Nothing should stay in an uncomfortable place. If it does, I will adjust it or remove it."

Kirk admits she has had people "deathly afraid" of needles who have come to her as a last resort to help a particularly stubborn ailment. Soon after, they become believers. "One woman was the most afraid I've ever had," recalled Kirk, who practices from her home business, Wellness Acupuncture. "During the second treatment she fell asleep so hard I had to wake her up. I told her she went from one extreme to another."

As to how it works, there is more to acupuncture than meets the skin.

Each needle has a purpose to not only ease or control pain, but to treat a host of endocrine, circulatory and systemic conditions by activating different reactions. Needles are inserted in points to stimulate energy flow or the release of endorphins, a natural pain reliever in the body.

Acupuncture is said to help people with such maladies as fibromyalgia, insomnia, headaches, labor pain, depression, arthritis, skin problems, constipation, menstrual cramps, infertility, sports injuries, and chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting.

Kirk describes acupuncture as a "stimulation therapy."

"The needles don't force your body to do anything," she explained. "It stimulates your body to do what it already knows how to do. It just gives it some extra help."

In a Western medical sense, Seelye said the needles are signaling the parasympathetic nervous system to work in order to relax the body, "moving, unblocking, warming, cooling and balancing."

Treatments can last anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour, depending on what needs to be done and the practitioner. Inserting the needles doesn't take long; people spend most of the session relaxing while the needles do the work.

"We (people) do have our own innate way of healing," Seelye said. "I tell my patients that I do 20 percent of the work and you do 80 percent."

Seelye recalls her most unique treatment: providing acupuncture to a woman while her dentist replaced a crown on her tooth. The woman opted for acupuncture needles over Novocaine, gas or any other pain-relieving medications.

The result? A pain-free crown treatment.

"You heard of things like this happening in China, people getting acupuncture for surgery," she said. "It was amazing to see it live."

## Blending treatments

Kirk and Seelye say Western medicine offers much value, too. The challenge, Kirk added, is knowing how to blend the traditional with the alternative medicines like acupuncture.

Kirk said Western medicine is great for diagnosing problems. Acupuncturists aren't allowed to do that legally. Unlike doctors, they cannot see inside the body through X-rays or body scans to see why it hurts.

"If somebody is having severe heart pain, you want to go to a medical doctor," she said. "Now once

## Acupuncture 101

What is it? Originating in China thousands of years ago, acupuncture is the treatment of pain or disease by inserting fine needles in specific points on the body. Acupuncture points are located in all areas, sometimes far removed from the pain area. How does it work? Traditional Chinese theory explains acupuncture as a technique for balancing the flow of energy or life force – known as Qi or Chi (chee) – believed to flow through pathways (meridians) in your body. By inserting needles into specific points along these meridians, acupuncture practitioners believe that your energy flow will re-balance.

Acupuncture has been used to treat existing,

recurring and new illnesses and injuries, and improve overall health. People have turned to it for relief from conditions such as fibromyalgia, headaches, migraines, labor pain, low back pain, depression, arthritis, skin problems, constipation, menstrual cramps, constipation, hypertension, infertility, sports injuries, and chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting.

For more information, resources are available online, including acupuncture.com, mayoclinic.com and the Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Association of Minnesota (www.aomam.org).

Source: Mayo Clinic

you've ruled everything out, and I know they're under good medical care, I can help them keep their body strong."

Seelye, who had worked as a surgical technologist before getting her master's degree in acupuncture and Oriental medicine from Northwestern Health Sciences University in Bloomington, agreed.

"The majority of people (seeing her) already have gone to their Western medicine doctors and those doctors will send them to me or they will say 'I don't know what else to do,'" she said.

Diagnosed with cancer shortly after beginning her master's degree in acupuncture and Oriental medicine at Northwestern, she credits acupuncture with helping her cope with the effects of chemotherapy and radiation on her body and the anxiety of cancer on her mind.

"I just felt better after the acupuncture," said Kirk, whose general practice already handles a number of cancer patients. "It's like, 'OK, I can do this.' And I just want to give that away to others going through the same thing."

"The needles don't force your body to do anything. It stimulates your body to do what it already knows how to do. It just gives it some extra help."

Prior Lake acupuncturist Marcia Kirk

Treatments can be very focused on specific problems. For instance, Kirk has been helping a man who has been told he needs hip replacement surgery. But, according to her, he's not ready for that yet.

Kirk said she was able to help his hip and leg problems in the first treatment. After three visits, she has moved on to treat his other problems.

"It's not completely gone," she added of the pain. "But he said he couldn't stand more than about three minutes before his ankle would start to burn. Now he doesn't have that at all."

Some people can feel noticeable improvements during the first treatment. For others, it takes longer.

"The longer you've had something the longer it's going to take to unravel," said Kirk. "If you were hiking and really twisted your knee, I could possibly handle it in one treatment. But if you didn't get anything done and it got worse, and you came to see me three years from now, it would take longer."

## Their stories

Kirk, who has been practicing for about four years, would eventually love to treat just cancer patients.

Long before she became an acupuncturist, Seelye was helped by one to get her young life back on track.

At 11 years old, she was experiencing severe pain in her left leg. The diagnosis was Reflex Diagnosis Dystrophy Syndrome. It was recommended that her sciatic nerve be severed. She refused after doctors told her she would have no feeling on the left side of her body.

Instead, her parents took her first to a physical therapist and then to an acupuncturist.

"It helped, and that was the seed first planted that led to this," said Seelye, who started practicing shortly after graduating in December 2008.

As for the future, this avid sports fan would love to use her acupuncture skills to help injured professional athletes get back on the field quicker.

"Obviously, those are multi-million dollar bodies but it doesn't intimidate me in that sense," she said. "If we can help them, why not?"

My legs aren't worth millions of dollars, but they're mighty valuable to me. When my session with Seelye ends, I stand up tall and stretch. No pain in my left knee.

"Another seed planted," she smiled.

Stuart Sudak is a freelance writer living in Chaska.

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# Pushing the limits

Endurance coach helps triathletes go further faster

By **Stuart Sudak**

Greg Albrecht knows a thing or two about triathlons.

The Eden Prairie man has completed more than 200 triathlons over 23 years. And, for the past 10 years, Albrecht has coached hundreds of triathletes to swim, bike and run farther than they ever imagined.

At 55 years old, the thrill of competition to be found on the road or water keeps him moving and moving, though the miles and laps don't whisk by as quick as they once did.

No matter. He's still enjoying himself.

"I love competing against myself, just trying to improve," he said. "Even at my advanced age I still find myself improving over my previous year's time. I'm not as fast as I was when I was in my prime shape in my 30s, but it's still very rewarding."

His spirit of competition burns strong from the sidelines, too, as a part-time endurance coach at Life Time Fitness, working out of the St. Louis Park club. There, he shares his triathlon and marathon knowledge to help people of all fitness levels push themselves to the next level and beyond.



Photo courtesy of Greg Albrecht

**Eden Prairie resident Greg Albrecht (right) has been coaching triathletes for 10 years. He is pictured with one of his students, Nate Stangler, who has become an accomplished triathlete under Albrecht's tutelage.**

Many, he proudly boasts, have surpassed him in performance. He likes it that way. That shows he's doing his job, one that he feels almost born to do.

"Ever since I was young I wanted to be a coach," said Albrecht, who is also an executive recruiter. "I love mentoring and teaching. This allows me to take that passion and share my love for triathlons with people who are just getting into it."

## The coach's advice

So what does it take to be a triathlete?

Well, for the average, healthy person who wants to compete in a triathlon for the first time, Albrecht suggests setting small goals that become more intense and ambitious as he or she progresses in training and endurance.

He understands, though, that the first step can be the hardest.

"But once you get going, it's amazing," he said. "I find setting goals helps people."

For instance, a first step could consist of training for an indoor triathlon, a timed event that Life Time Fitness and some community centers organize. The Life Time event, more beginner-friendly than the average outdoor triathlon, consists of 10 minutes of swimming, 30 minutes of biking and 20 minutes of running.

Or that first step might be starting to train now for a summer triathlon. He suggests marking the event's date down and working backward to assess exactly what you will need to do to compete.

"Figure out what you can do now, and then work out a weekly plan, then a monthly plan," he said.

He said a realistic goal for a first triathlon is not necessarily the time you post compared to others in the field, but just finishing.

"Once you do that, you will establish a base time that you work on trying to improve in future triathlons," he said. "So, you're really racing against yourself and your own ability."

Indeed, Albrecht tries to coach his triathletes to focus on improving race to race.

"That can bring a lot of satisfaction to you," he said. "It can give you a real sense of accomplishment."

## Why coaching?

Albrecht recommends people consider an endurance coach or personal trainer to help them devise



Photo courtesy of Life Time Fitness

**Swimmers take part in a past Life Time Fitness triathlon. As an endurance coach, Albrecht has trained both beginner and experienced triathletes to excel at such events.**

a training plan and stick to it. For a cost, Life Time triathletes can receive individual coaching online and over the phone, or in a group setting training with others.

"You don't necessarily have to get a coach," he admits. "You can do that on your own if you want. But it's very helpful to have one. Once people have a goal, it's important to feed it and to stoke the fire so to speak. And get with other people who have that same passion."

As a coach, he's had his share of success stories. One is Nate Stangler.

When he began training in his mid-30s, Stangler weighed about 250 pounds. Gradually, through diet and exercise, the weight came off. At a sleek 190 pounds, he completed the rigorous Ironman Triathlon, consisting of a 2.4-mile swim, 112 miles of biking and a 26.2-mile run.

"You have 17 hours to do it," Albrecht said. "He did it in 15 hours. That was a major accomplishment for him."

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of training

for triathlons is what you're losing around your waistline.

"You have a better cardiovascular system, you lose weight, you have more energy," Albrecht said of the benefits of exercise. "I think people who work out have just a better positive outlook on life."

Albrecht decided to give triathlons a try after running every day for 20 years. He realized doing so wasn't that great on his joints, so he added biking and swimming to his weekly workout regimen and liked it.

That was 1986. He's been doing triathlons ever since.

Albrecht has a bit more advice. When training, try a jump in the lake for a more real-world triathlon experience.

"Unlike pools, if it's windy there are waves," he said. "You have to make sure you're not breathing when the wave is hitting you. You'll get a mouthful of water every time."

Stuart Sudak is a freelance writer living in Chaska.

# Going raw

Food made without heat, dairy, sugar or meat gains traction in suburbs

By **Mollee Francisco**

For those looking to eat better in the New Year without sacrificing taste, raw may be the way to go.

More than just baby carrots and trail mix, Rebecca and Quentin Ireys have created a small empire of tasty raw treats to satisfy the senses. And they've done it all from the comforts of downtown Chaska.

The Shorewood couple opened Pure Market Express in August, taking over the space formerly occupied by the Chaska Bakery.

But a bakery, they are not. In fact, nothing in their kitchen is heated to more than 118 degrees Fahrenheit. Heat destroys live enzymes, wiping out much of food's nutritional value, they explained.

"Eat better and you'll be better," said Rebecca, who serves as Pure Market Express' executive chef. She first began toying with raw foods in order to lose baby weight.

Eating raw foods, Rebecca soon learned she could eat as much as she wanted and still lose weight. She said she loved how she felt on the raw diet, but finding raw foods she wanted to eat on a regular basis was another story.

In addition to eschewing heat, raw foods don't contain any dairy, refined sugar, preservatives or meat – a drastic contrast from the food most Americans consume.

Rebecca spent years tinkering with recipes to find healthy food substitutions to develop raw meals packed with tons of flavor, but none of the guilt. Her lasagna uses oregano-marinated zucchini in place of pasta noodles. Ground pine nuts stand in for mozzarella cheese.

It's a formula she developed training for her raw foods certification and afterwards with plenty of trial and error. Her family served as guinea pigs for most of her creations. "After awhile everyone started to enjoy the food," she said.

Today, Rebecca has developed more than 100 raw food items – everything from pumpkin pie and chocolate cheesecake to sushi and hamburgers. And she is constantly adding new foods to the Pure Market Express repertoire.

All Pure Market Express foods are available for mail order across the country. Locals can also make the trek to Chaska to pick up their favorites,

or visit Lakewinds Natural Foods in Chanhassen and Minnetonka.

"The response has been really good," said Rebecca. "We've got regulars coming from St. Cloud, Hudson and Hutchinson."

They've also developed a small celebrity following – getting the seal of approval from singers Jason Mraz and Moby who tasted Pure Market Express foods while in the Twin Cities for concerts.

"It's not just delicious food," said Quentin. "But health-giving food."

Quentin is such a staunch supporter of his wife's creations that beginning January 2, he's committed to 30 days of eating nothing but raw foods. He'll document his experience in a video blog on the Pure Market Express website.

"It's about immersion," he said. "Changing behaviors."

The Ireys know they have a lot of work to do to get over the stigma associated with raw foods, but they are passionate about their products.

"We want to mainstream it," said Rebecca. "Most people that try our foods are surprised by how good they taste."

So they'll continue to work to change the public's perception of raw foods, one slice of scrumptious chocolate cheesecake at a time.

## Resource

Pure Market Express  
500 Chestnut St., Chaska  
Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m., Sat. - Sun.



Photo by Mollee Francisco

**Rebecca Ireys creates Pure Market Express sushi using tomato, avocado, mushrooms and a mixture of carrot, dill and kelp.**

noon – 6 p.m.

For more information, call (952) 452-4865 or visit [www.puremarketexpress.com](http://www.puremarketexpress.com)

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