

TECHNOLOGY & DISEASE SPOTLIGHT

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: TECHNOLOGY, HOPE, & AGENCY

BY ALLEN GEE & REGINA GEE

Alzheimer's disease is an intriguing case study; it illustrates why using technology promoting wellness is compelling. Alzheimer's is a type of dementia accounting for at least half of the cases of memory loss in the elderly. The older we get, the more likely we are to develop Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's robs people of their faculties to live a high quality and independent life, making it a particularly devastating disease. Alzheimer's and its treatment, and the pursuit of its cure, are also entangled in interesting tensions between brain and mind, aging and pathology, and genes and environment. Nearly 6 million Americans over 65 have the diagnosis and many many more have mild to moderate cognitive impairment. In Alzheimer's there are plaques and tangles of abnormal toxic proteins in the brain. These proteins disrupt communications between brain cells and kill the cells. As the brain cells die, the brain shrinks and cognitive function declines.

More and more, science is demonstrating the contribution of lifestyle factors associated with developing Alzheimer's disease. Inadequate and poor sleep and sleep apneas can contribute to developing Alzheimer's, as does diet and nutrition. Regular exercise appears to have protective benefit against Alzheimer's. Mindfulness and calming the nervous system also appears to be beneficial. Research is showing we have more opportunity to influence the course of our aging than typically acknowledged.

Fear of losing our cognitive faculties, the very thing that makes us human, is a core fear. This fear becomes more relevant as we live through our later years. Technologies providing insight into our form and function, insight to relevant life changes, and the tools to make those changes are becoming more and more popular. They represent a chance for agency and offer a sense of control in the midst of a disease process that threatens our sense of self.

Sleep, nutrition, movement and mindfulness all influence the development of Alzheimer's disease. Addressing these drivers is important for everyone to maximize our cognitive abilities, our physiological health and our overall performance. The earlier we learn how to better care for ourselves, the greater impact it has on our long-term wellness. Technologies and research that support understanding lifestyle impacts and their interventions take abstract concepts of healing and disease and make them more tangible. Alzheimer's research is particularly powerful because we are interested in maintaining our humanity and consciousness when unseen forces try to strip them from us. Technology for Alzheimer's disease is a place of hope.



FRONTIER WELLNESS TIP

PRACTICE ANTI-INFLAMMATORY EATING

Inflammation is part of the body's healing response; when it becomes chronic inflammation, it becomes a problem. Chronic inflammation is when your inflammation response lingers, causing your body to remain swollen, red, and painful for extended periods of time. This state has been shown to be a cause of many major illnesses and is linked to many modern lifestyle practices.

Smoking, stress, toxicants, and certain foods have been shown to increase inflammation in the body. Every body responds differently to different habits, and accordingly, decreasing inflammation in the body is person specific. If you are looking to decrease inflammation in your body, a good place to start is with you diet. Making different choices about the food we consume is a powerful way to arrive in different states of wellbeing.

Dr. Andrew Weil has developed The Anti-Inflammatory Diet to help people decrease inflammation through the foods they eat. You can learn more about the specifics of the diet & anti-inflammatory mindset in our article [“The Anti-Inflammatory Diet.”](#)

NEW TECH: SPIRAL 3D BODY SCANNING AT THE HEALING SPACE

BY REGINA GEE

This month has brought exciting progress in assembling our digital assessment suite! Our goal is to outfit The Healing Space with a collection of personalized precision medicine tools that put innovation to practice and changes lives. Currently, we have the Gait Mat, VR headsets, Cognitive Testing, Drivable. And we are excited to announce the next piece of the suite: The Spiral Health 3D Body Scanner.

3D body scanning is a powerful visualization tool. With the Spiral scan, you are literally able to see your body, and how it changes overtime. Spiral takes hundreds of body measurements and provides data on your body shape, body fat, lean mass, and posture among other metrics. This knowledge provides specific insight into your body and gives you personalized feedback. Is your new diet having an impact? Are you gaining muscle and losing fat with your exercise routine? Is your posture improving? The Spiral Scan helps to answer all of these questions and gives you results that you can see, making your progress tangible in a new way.

Additionally, Spiral is a strong tool in the hands of your physician. Doctors are trained to utilize a visual assessment of their patients; they do a visual exam during consultations and then recruit different medical technologies (x-rays, labs, MRI's) to build a visualization of what is wrong to shape informed interventions. Spiral is an interesting technology because it creates another level of visual analysis for medical intervention. In addition to presenting "see it to believe it" results, Spiral is also equipped with algorithms that analyze body measurements and surfaces relevant health data regarding risk factors for several chronic and serious diseases. Taken together, Spiral helps you and your physician understand your health at a deeper level.

WE'RE READING:

THE GIFTS OF IMPERFECTION
BY BRENÉ BROWN

WE'RE LISTENING:

DARE TO LEAD: BRENÉ
WITH CHARLES DUHIGG ON
HABITS & PRODUCTIVITY

WE'RE WATCHING:

(RE-WATCHING)
FRIENDS



REAL PRODUCTIVITY

BY REGINA GEE

In my work and life, I am compelled by the people who take concepts often draped in cliches and uncover the truth at their center. This is work that make things that matter more real, useful, and accessible. Recently, I came across Charles Duhigg's work on productivity and I am fascinated by how he grounds this concept.

Typically, when I think productivity, I think getting things done. But with his work in [Smarter, Faster, Better](#), Duhigg defines productivity differently.

He says real productivity is about getting things done without sacrificing everything we care about along the way. Real productivity is about asking yourself if you are doing the right thing, the most important thing; are you responding or are you discerning & thinking? Are you engaging from your reactivity or from your agency? Real productivity is about building cognitive routines that get you to think deeply, every day. It is about making your values the center of the story you tell yourself, and using this self-awareness to shape what you do.

This understanding of productivity is a paradigm shift from the definition of getting things done. I am intrigued by the invitation here: if productivity is not about working more and sweating harder, if there is a

difference between being busy and genuinely productive, then there is space for me to infuse my life with more vitality. And, for me, this involves embracing a different narrative about how to do the work. Before, I believed in the grind, the hustle, the striving. I was going to earn my worthiness. I wore exhaustion as a badge. Now, I want to cultivate a life of sufficiency. A life where I get the rest and support I need to do the work that makes me come alive and that requires my wholeness. I think this is the heart of spiritual care, of doing the work that really matters, the work that is bigger than myself and that connects me to spirit and encourages the vital and sacred. I am interested in a life that understands productivity as doing what is important, not just doing. A life that is whole, not just busy.