

Health & Wellness



Your guide to a healthier mind, body and soul

Local Businesses

Opinions, advice and trends from health and wellness professionals

Beverage Supplements

Bulletproof Coffee & plant-based protein powder

Events Calendar

Discover upcoming health & wellness events

Upcoming Health & Wellness Events

Big Sky

Big Sky Farmers Market

Sept. 21 & 28 | 5 p.m.
Fire Pit Park

Strength to Surrender

Sept. 23 | 6 p.m.
Santosha Wellness Center

Wildly Free to Be

Sept. 25 | 2 p.m.
Santosha Wellness Center

Fall Community Cleanse

Oct. 5 - 18
Santosha Wellness Center

Kid's Yoga Classes

Fridays at 3:15 for grades 3-5
Fridays at 4:15 for grades K-2
Santosha Wellness Center

Free Mobile Health Screenings

Sept. 28 | 8 a.m.
Corner of Route 191 & Lone Mountain Tr.

Free Community Fitness Classes

Sept. 24, Oct. 8, Oct. 15 | 9 a.m.
MVMT Fitness

The Healing Benefits of Teas & Tisanes

Sept. 26 | 6 p.m.
The Cauldron Botanicals

Lavender for Everyday Health

Oct. 17 | 6 p.m.
The Cauldron Botanicals

Bozeman

Bozeman Out of the Darkness Walk

Sept. 17 | 9 a.m.
Gallatin County Regional Park

John Colter Run

Sept. 17 | 9 a.m.
Missouri Headwaters State Park

Free Mobile Health Screenings

Sept. 20 | 10 a.m.
Bozeman Public Library

Inner Engineering Meditation Program

Sept. 22 - 25
Lindley Center

Ballet Barre Bootcamp

Sept. 26 - 30 | 6:30 a.m.
Montana Movement Arts Center

6th Annual Opera Run

Oct. 1 | 9 a.m.
Lindley Park

Family Circus Time

Oct. 16 | 4 p.m.
The Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture

Run for your Life 5k & 10k

Oct. 29 | 9 a.m.
MSU Bobcat Stadium

Bozeman Winter Farmers Market

Saturdays at 9 a.m.
The Emerson Ballroom

Monday Metamorphosis

Mondays at 4 p.m.
Mountain Yoga Bozeman

Yoga for all

Tuesdays at 11 a.m. & noon
Bozeman Public Library

Learn to Skate Classes

Sundays at noon
Gallatin County Fairgrounds

Bowl for Kids' Sake

Fridays & Saturdays | 4 p.m.
Bozeman Bowl

HEALTHY REVIEWS

Garden of Life Raw Protein & Greens formula

While I love spinach and vanilla on their own, rarely do I think of combining them into one meal. However, I recently discovered Garden of Life's Raw Protein and Greens protein powder that includes organic spinach, kale, broccoli, alfalfa grass, and real vanilla.

That list of ingredients may not sound very appetizing, but it's one of the best protein powders I've ever had. It tastes great, has 20 grams of protein per serving and less than 1 gram of sugar. Plus, this product doesn't have a chalky taste when blended.

Perhaps my favorite thing about Raw Protein and Greens is that it's gluten, dairy, and soy free, as well as vegan. I'm lactose intolerant and it's almost impossible for me to find a source of nondairy and flavorful protein to include in my diet.

Here's a recipe I use as a meal replacement for breakfast that boosts my energy in the morning and keeps me full until lunch:

- 1 scoop Raw Protein and Greens (vanilla flavor)
- 1 cup frozen strawberries (you can use fresh but I prefer frozen so I don't have to add ice to get a smoothie consistency)
- 1 banana
- 1 tablespoon almond butter
- 2 cups cold water

Blend to desired thickness and enjoy!
- Taylor-Ann Smith

\$44.95 (19.3 ounces) gardenoflife.com/shop

Octane for the brain Bulletproof Coffee Starter Kit

EBS STAFF

Are you hip to the hype? Californians are putting butter in their coffee to make a rich brew, replace breakfast and keep hunger pangs at bay.

Here at the Outlaw Partners office we thought we'd take a closer look with a Bulletproof Coffee Starter Kit, which takes the buttery coffee brew up a notch with its "Brain Octane."

The Brain Octane is a medium-chain triglyceride, better known as coconut oil, which has many health benefits including energy metabolism, antifungal and anti-inflammatory properties. Bulletproof claims it's also a source of brain fuel that's significantly healthier than the sugar pervasive in our diets.

Brew 8 ounces of ground Bulletproof Coffee, add 1-2 tablespoons of your favorite unsalted butter and 1 teaspoon of Brain Octane, and blend it for 20-30 seconds until it reaches a frothy goodness. And be sure to leave the lid of your blender cracked slightly when dealing with hot liquids... We learned the hard way.

Here are the results an hour after drinking Bulletproof Coffee, care of our Outlaw tasters: "[It has] a rich, creamy taste," said Editor Joseph T. O'Connor. "Who knew butter and caffeine went hand in hand? I drink coffee much of the day, but the savory flavor and energy boost of Bulletproof Coffee makes me feel 10 feet tall."



"The texture was nice and smooth," said Marketing Coordinator Amy Delgrande. "I could definitely include this into my daily morning routine. I feel alive!"

"I was anticipating a heavy, more viscous liquid because of the added fat, but it's actually pretty smooth," said Graphic Designer Carie Birkmeier.

"It tastes like flat whites, New Zealand's amazing version of lattes," said Media and Events Director Ersin Ozer. "The effects are similar to drinking Yerba Matte. It's like having a cerebral bodyguard keeping distractions out of my mind."

As the day wore on, the consensus was focus, focus, focus. We think Bulletproof might be on to something here.

\$33.96 bulletproof.com



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Lone Peak Physical Therapy

Focus on strength and mobility to gear up for ski season



Overhead deep squat: Squat as deep as you can, keeping good form. Your mid/upper back should be flat and you shouldn't have an excessive curve in your lower back. PHOTOS COURTESY OF LONE PEAK PHYSICAL THERAPY

Work-out Plan

Strength: Perform each exercise in succession for three rounds. Focus on controlling your movement. Rest as needed between rounds.

- 20 jump squats
- 20 jump lunges
- 20 split squats
- 20 alternating skater lunges
- 20 jump squats

If it's too easy add another round, decrease rest between exercises, or add weight.

Reduce the number or repetitions, take out a round, or change the jumping squats/lunges to the more traditional form if it's too difficult.

Mobility: Perform each movement for 20-25 repetitions.

- Hip mobilization 1 – Elevate one foot in front of you, keep your back leg straight, and lean your hips forward until a stretch is felt in your back leg hip.
- Hip mobilization 2 – Elevate one foot onto a stool that is adjacent to you. Make sure your legs are in a wide stance. Lean towards your up leg, creating a stretch/mobilization in the leg that is on the ground.
- Thoracic spine mobility – Place one foot onto a stool with your feet in a long stance. Take both arms and reach/rotate over your up leg.
- Deep squat – Get down into a deep squat position with your feet wide and your elbows inside your knees. Keep your heels on the ground and shift your weight from side to side.

Don't underestimate the importance of mobility! Efficient mobility is key to injury prevention.

Lone Peak Physical Therapy is located in the Big Sky Medical Center at 334 Town Center Ave. in Big Sky. Visit lonepeakpt.com or call (406) 995-7525 for more information.

With summer winding down and the winter season right around the corner, now is the time to start thinking about preparing your body for the slopes and start addressing those injuries that may be lurking from last year. To get the most out of the upcoming winter, toss out those traditional exercises and start performing dynamic full body movements before the snow starts to fall. Your body will thank you.

Begin by assessing your baseline fitness level. We recommend four basic movements to get started: the overhead deep squat, the single leg squat, a deep anterior lunge, and a deep lateral lunge. If you feel asymmetrical, have difficulty, or have any pain or stiffness with these movements, it may suggest a mobility or stability deficit. Once you have identified your limitation, you can begin to address the issue at hand.

Another aspect that often gets overlooked with traditional winter season preparation is the type of exercise you are doing. Winter sports such as skiing and snowboarding require your body to perform continual eccentric muscle contractions—think shock absorption or loading your muscles. This is where many traditional exercises fail; they don't specifically mimic what you're body will be enduring on the mountain.

A tailored approach to what your body will be experiencing is more appropriate. Below is a routine that will improve your strength and mobility, and significantly reduce your risk of injury.

Start with your assessment: Perform 15 repetitions of each movement. Do you feel stiffness in your hips, knees, or back? Can't squat to, or below, parallel? Having troubles balancing with the single leg squat? All of these may be addressed with simple mobility and strength interventions.



Split squat: Elevate one leg behind you and place your front leg far enough ahead to create a 90-degree angle (or close to it). Perform a single-leg squat, pausing at the bottom. Return to the starting position and repeat.



Thoracic mobility: Place one foot on a stool with your feet in a long stance. Take both arms and reach/rotate over your up leg.

Santoshha hosts fall community cleanse

BY RACHEL ANDERSON
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – As fall quickly approaches in the mountains, Big Sky begins to prepare for the winter season ahead. The off-season is a transitional time for Big Sky residents, and preparing together as a community may help some endure the cold months before skiing and snowboarding begin.

Callie Stolz, owner of Santoshha Wellness Center, is putting on a fall community cleanse for those looking to prepare mentally and physically for the cooler weather ahead.

Beginning in spring 2013, the Big Sky community cleanse has taken place twice annually, and participation has nearly doubled in that time.

“A community cleanse can be so powerful because we have one another, to support one another,” Stolz said.

Utilizing Ayurvedic principles, Stolz teaches a complete body, mind and spiritual approach to health and wellbeing throughout the cleanse. Ayurveda is one of the world’s oldest methods of lifestyle medicine. Originating in India, it utilizes a holistic method to health and healing systems. Its meaning translates to the science and knowledge of life.

Stolz describes the lens of Ayurveda science as eating in harmony with the seasons. “It’s more raw food like greens and berries in the spring and heartier foods in the fall,” she said.

The main objectives of the cleanse are to reboot your digestive system; energize your lymphatic systems; change the way your body metabolize fats; become more aware about what you’re eating; and increase energy levels while releasing old habits.

Eating three solid meals a day comprised of whole, unprocessed foods, without snacking, is the primary focus of the diet, blending in pre- and post-meal herbs as well.

It begins with a four day pre-cleanse period, which prepares your body and opens up the pathways for detoxification. Lasting seven days, the main portion reboots your body’s ability to burn fat as fuel and to purify and renew your body’s detoxification system. The final phase is the post-cleanse that lasts three days, rebuilding your body’s ability to digest and process foods again.

Stolz provides an assessment for each participant, customizing it for the individual. “Committing to your own program is essential,” she said.

The community cleanse also includes self-inquiry exercises, such as journaling to detoxify the mind.

“Asking introspective questions, creates a release on an emotional level,” Stolz said. “It brings self-awareness.”

The community cleanse will begin Wednesday, Oct. 5. An early bird special is available until Sept. 21, with a discounted rate for repeat participants. The package includes pre- and post-meal herbs, body oil, daily email support, weekly meetings and an informational booklet with meal ideas and more.

On Wednesday, Sept. 21, from 7-8 p.m., Stolz will host a free informational session at Santoshha Wellness Center.

Bone broth The ‘new’ ancient super food

BY TARA GALE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Tradition is something I grew up with, but not something I’ve continued while raising my own children after moving across the country from New Jersey, far away from our “elders.” I sometimes feel I’m missing many important components of healthy living, those practiced by our ancestors that have somehow become lost in this new and busy age we live in.

I remember being sick as a child and my grandmother making chicken noodle soup, using the whole fresh chicken, as well as bones we would save and freeze for the sole purpose of broth making. The comfort of this warm, steamy dish is something that’s now being recognized not only for its calming benefits, but also for the healing properties that come with simmering bones.

Our forefathers used every part of an animal they killed. Those parts that were not so tasty or easy to eat were added to a cauldron, hanging over a fire and simmering for days, with more vegetables and water added as needed. The simmering down of these bones released some very important and complementary nutrients to the steak or burger meat that we now choose to consume almost exclusively.

Researchers from the nonprofit Weston A. Price Foundation have discovered that the magnesium, calcium, and other trace minerals that come from broth are much more easily absorbed than those found in pill form. They also discovered that glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, sold for joint and arthritis pain, is more effective when received through real bone broth.

Bone broth is making an incredible comeback as many consumers are realizing the benefits of this super food. Most cultures around the world have kept up this tradition and in the U.S. we’re catching on to the numerous benefits. Those suffering from allergies, depression, insomnia, fatigue, inflammation in the form of arthritis and joint pain, among many other ailments, are beginning to reap the benefits of this wonder food.

As Dr. Josh Axe, a doctor of natural medicine and syndicated radio host, explains on his website draxe.com that the gelatin from a good bone broth works directly with our joints to help keep them moving freely while also ensuring strength in our bones as we age. The collagen and gelatin received through drinking bone broth helps to restore our gut lining, aiding in digestive issues, as well as food allergies and intolerances.

Collagen, a necessary building block for healthy skin, hair and nails is another wonderful benefit of broth and its anti-aging, and wrinkle- and cellulite-reducing capabilities. A wonderful addition to a detox, broth helps the body eliminate harmful toxins as it promotes the liver in expelling toxins while also improving our absorption of essential nutrients, amino acids and antioxidants.

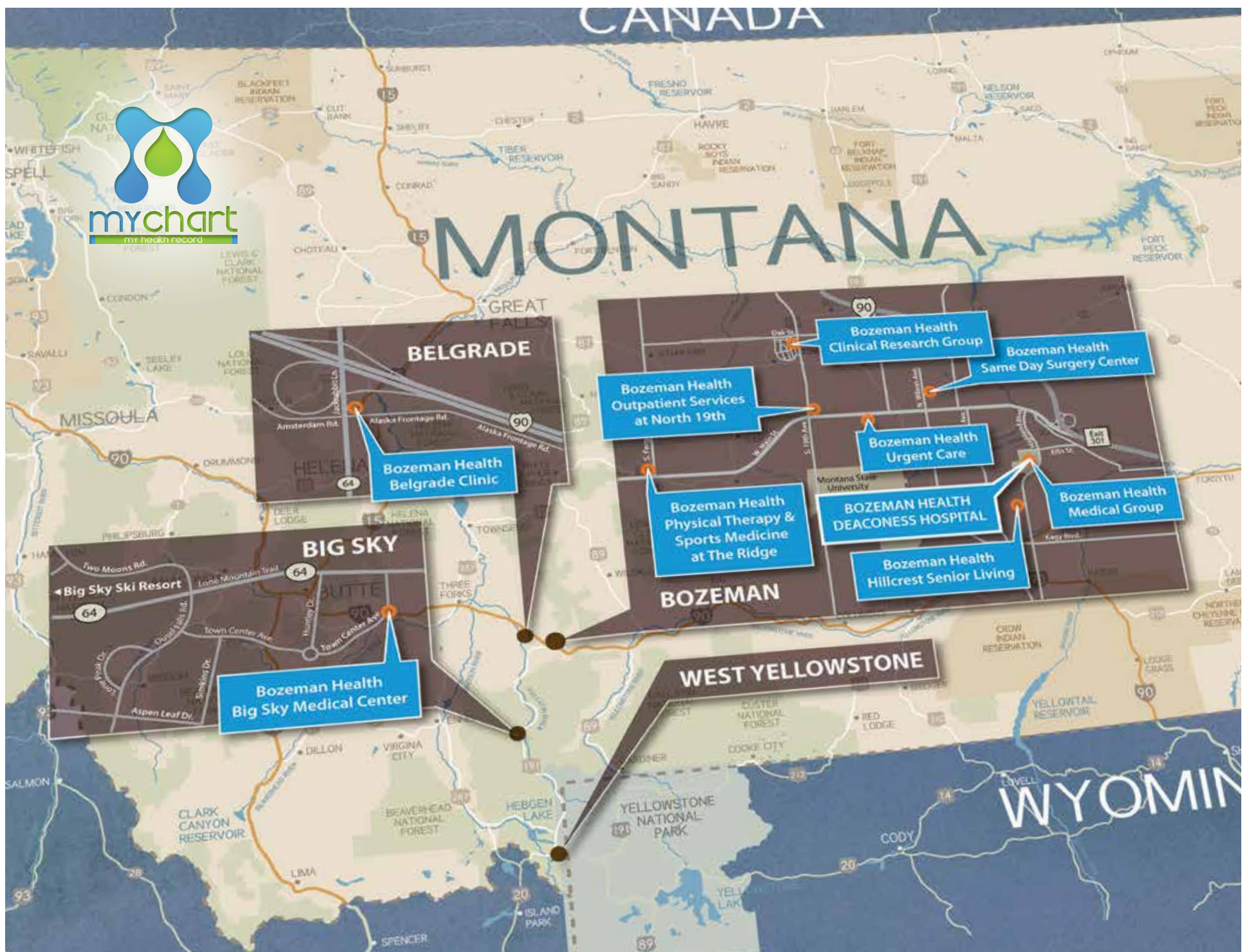
Many of us who live in southwest Montana enjoy the mountains for all they offer, such as skiing, hiking, fishing and hunting. Now that bow hunting season has begun, think about taking some time and using those parts of your animal, including bones and feet, that you may not normally use and make some of nature’s ultimate healing drink.

Tara Gale is a Complementary Alternative Medicine Practitioner and the owner of The Cauldron Botanicals located at 245 Town Center Ave. in Big Sky, where she makes fresh bone broth daily. Cauldron offers grass fed and finished beef/bison broth, as well as organic pork, chicken, turkey and lamb broths, sourcing its animals locally.



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Bozeman Health

Promoting big health in Big Sky Country



Bozeman Health operates with the principle that continuous improvement of quality and safety is key to its success and that service excellence is critical to its mission. To that effect, Bozeman Health is focused on offering high-tech, specialized care provided by highly credentialed, qualified and experienced physicians and healthcare providers at all its locations.

At Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center (BSMC), one of Montana's newest hospitals, the team focuses on one goal: the health of residents and visitors in southern Gallatin County. From primary and inpatient care, emergency and pharmacy services, to diagnostic imaging and laboratory testing, the team of five physicians and support staff share their expertise in providing high-quality health care.

The facility is convenient for residents and visitors in Big Sky, West Yellowstone, Yellowstone National Park and eastern Idaho. BSMC



With more than 200 physicians and providers in our network, you can find the one that's right for you and your family.

all Bozeman Health providers to securely and conveniently communicate and share health information with their patients. It also allows providers to access a patient's full medical history so they can administer comprehensive treatment based on accurate information.

Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital is an 86-bed facility, Joint Commission-accredited, licensed Level III trauma center in Bozeman. Nearly 200 staff physicians and health professionals represent 43 specialties at the hospital's clinics.

The Bozeman Health Cancer Center team includes medical oncologists/hematologists and radiation oncologists who work with other specialists employing some of the latest technology. As a member of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, local patients have access to numerous clinical trials.

physicians also provide services one day a week on a rotating basis at Community Health Partners in West Yellowstone.

Big Sky Medical Center, along with all of Bozeman Health's clinics and locations, are part of an integrated electronic health record system. Known as MyChart, the system allows



Our staff is among the best of the best and they believe that every patient who walks through our doors deserves a safe, healing environment. PHOTOS COURTESY OF BOZEMAN HEALTH

Bozeman Health Heart Center is staffed by four cardiologists providing specialized care for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart conditions.

The emergency department, a 27-bed Level III verified trauma center, is staffed 24 hours a day to care for more than 25,000 patients a year. The trauma team—with members from the operating room, emergency department, anesthesiology, respiratory therapy, pharmacy, lab and radiology—can be assembled and ready even prior to an injured patient's arrival at the hospital.

Welcoming babies into the world is, without question, the happiest thing that happens at Bozeman Health. More than 1,200 babies were delivered last year in the six private, modern birth suites equipped with comfortable birthing beds and other technology to assist with delivery.

Bozeman Health Belgrade Clinic, opening Sept. 19, offers the best in total family care with providers in family medicine and pediatrics, physical therapy and sports medicine, outpatient laboratory, diagnostic imaging, as well as visiting urology and oncology specialists.

Bozeman Health has six other healthcare locations in Gallatin County offering laboratory services, physical therapy and sports medicine, hospice care, same-day surgery, clinical testing and urgent care. Finally, Bozeman Health's care network enhances access to specialty services across southwest Montana through outreach clinics in Butte, Dillon, Ennis, Livingston and Townsend.

Visit bozemanhealth.org to learn more about Bozeman Health and its services.



Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center is focused on providing reliable health services and critical care to residents in Big Sky, West Yellowstone and the surrounding region.

Medical Clinic of Big Sky Urgent Care!



2 Convenient Locations

MOUNTAIN VILLAGE – 406.995.2797

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Medical Clinic of Big Sky

Consider urgent care for emergency medical needs



Over the years that I've run the Medical Clinic of Big Sky, starting in a space under Big Sky Resort's gondola building and evolving into two modern offices offering urgent and family care, I've always tried to make the cost of receiving medical help as fair as possible. That includes local employees without insurance, older people on Medicare, and everybody else living in or visiting Big Sky. I think we've done a pretty good job of keeping costs low.

We've been lucky here in Big Sky to get a hospital with an emergency room open 24/7, providing great service. But hospital care in general, and ER care in particular, is more expensive than that provided in a private office.

Across the country, costs for treatment at urgent care centers are less than a visit to the emergency room or hospital clinic.

A large facial laceration, which would cost between \$300 and \$400 in our clinic, can be three to four times that price in an ER. Most of the time, the treatment at an urgent care facility is no different than what one would receive at an ER. However, many of my patients with injuries at night say they don't want to disturb me at home.

Viral gastroenteritis, food poisoning, and fever-producing infections can all lead to dehydration. Treating dehydration with IV fluids at our clinic usually costs between \$200 and \$300, while a patient's bill at the ER can be much more. This can include services we can't easily provide in our office, like a complete set of blood tests with immediate results, but over the years we've done a pretty good job without the help of lab tests in the vast majority of cases like this.

During the ski season, an ambulance ride from the ski area to the ER can be expensive. Oftentimes these cases can be treated at our urgent care facility on the mountain, and save people the costs of an ambulance ride down the mountain or to Bozeman.

When tests are readily available and easy to order, a hospital or ER bill will quickly escalate. Many inexpensive items can be overpriced. As documented in Steven Brill's 2013 Time magazine article, "Why Medical Bills are Killing Us," excessive hospital bills bankrupt more people than any other reason.

During this past year, we've all been aware of how drug companies are vastly overpricing items (e.g. Epipens) that should cost a lot less, to the detriment of many Americans. Emergency room care is different. The staff, the machines, and the overhead all contribute to what seem like inflated prices when compared to what urgent care clinics charge.

If you have insurance, that's great. But what if you have a high deductible or no insurance at all? An urgent care clinic is less expensive than an emergency room. Keep that in mind!

The Medical Clinic of Big Sky is located in Town Center at 11 Lone Peak Drive, Suite 202, and has a location at Big Sky Resort during the ski season. Visit medicalclinicofbigsky.com or call (406) 993-2797 for more information.



A unique program at Medical Clinic of Big Sky trains medical students and residents at the clinic, helping to keep costs down. PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEDICAL CLINIC OF BIG SKY



We are Big Sky's full-time, year-round urgent care facility.



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Montana Chiropractic Attitude is the conduit to effort

As I wrap up another busy season at my day job as owner of Montana Chiropractic and Sports Medicine and begin several weeks of offseason, I reflect on the time gone by. After nearly 22 years in business, and about 65,000 visits, it's clear to me why it's called practice. Unfortunately, in my business, practice never makes perfect.

I've made many connections with people from all over the world and all walks of life. Many have become lifelong patients, business partners and friends. It never ceases to amaze me how one person's attitude at the end of an exhausting day can change my attitude for the better almost instantly. As I become run down in the late stages of our busy seasons there seems to always be someone who perks me up.

I'm learning that we have very few things under our control in this life, and effort is the most important one. I always strive to give the best service I can from the beginning of the day to the end of the day regardless of my emotional, physical or spiritual moods.

Your attitude is the conduit to your effort, and effort can take you to great heights. You may think no one is watching, but they are. Teachers, parents, employers, friends and mentors are always judging what you say versus what you do. A great attitude cannot always guarantee a positive result, but the resulting effort cannot be discounted.

As human beings we're all experts at nonverbal communication. That is, we instinctively know how a person is feeling by their posture. Upon observation, we all know how someone feels when roundly slouched forward looking at the ground as opposed to upright looking forward with purpose. If your attitude is strained, most likely your posture is as well.

I practice chiropractic work, but this works hand-in-hand with one's overall outlook on life. Both need adjusting to achieve wellness.

I challenge everyone to dig deep by expecting more from themselves than anyone else could ever expect. Never stop going for it. No one is holding you back; not bosses, teachers, friends, relatives, politicians, or even your mother.

Leave nothing on the table, for life is too short. Do what you love to do—it's that simple. A quiet life of desperation is not a lifestyle. Stand tall. Thank you all that have lifted me when I needed it, and I hope I can return the favor for you.

Doctor of chiropractic Jeff Saad is the owner of Montana Chiropractic and Sports Medicine. Visit bigskychiro.com for more information.



Jeff Saad practices in his Big Sky office, but says chiropractic work is complementary to a patient's outlook on life. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTOS



Montana Chiropractic and Sports Medicine is located in Big Sky Town Center.

BACK40

For Explore Big Sky, the Back 40 is a resource: a place where we can delve into subjects and ask experts to share their knowledge.

Noun: wild or rough terrain adjacent to a developed area **Origin:** shortened form of “back 40 acres”

Relax . . . Strategies for Successful Meditation

BY MEGAN MOOK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Cultivating a successful meditation practice has less to do with actual meditation, and more to do with building a firm but kind-hearted foundation. Much like taking a test, if you stay up all night and skip breakfast, you’re unlikely to do well even if you’re a great test-taker.

Meditation is no different. And, like anything in life, a few simple pointers can reduce stress and make the process more enjoyable.

Although there are numerous meditation techniques, the guidelines are much the same. One of the most common is monitoring the breath. Other practices, such as Metta, include sending wishes of kindness and wellbeing to others. Both techniques reduce stress, increase focus, and create a sense of interconnection.

The techniques often build on themselves, but regardless of where you start, these age-old practices are designed to help move us in the direction of our best selves. The process can be daunting but these strategies can help.

HELPFUL HINTS

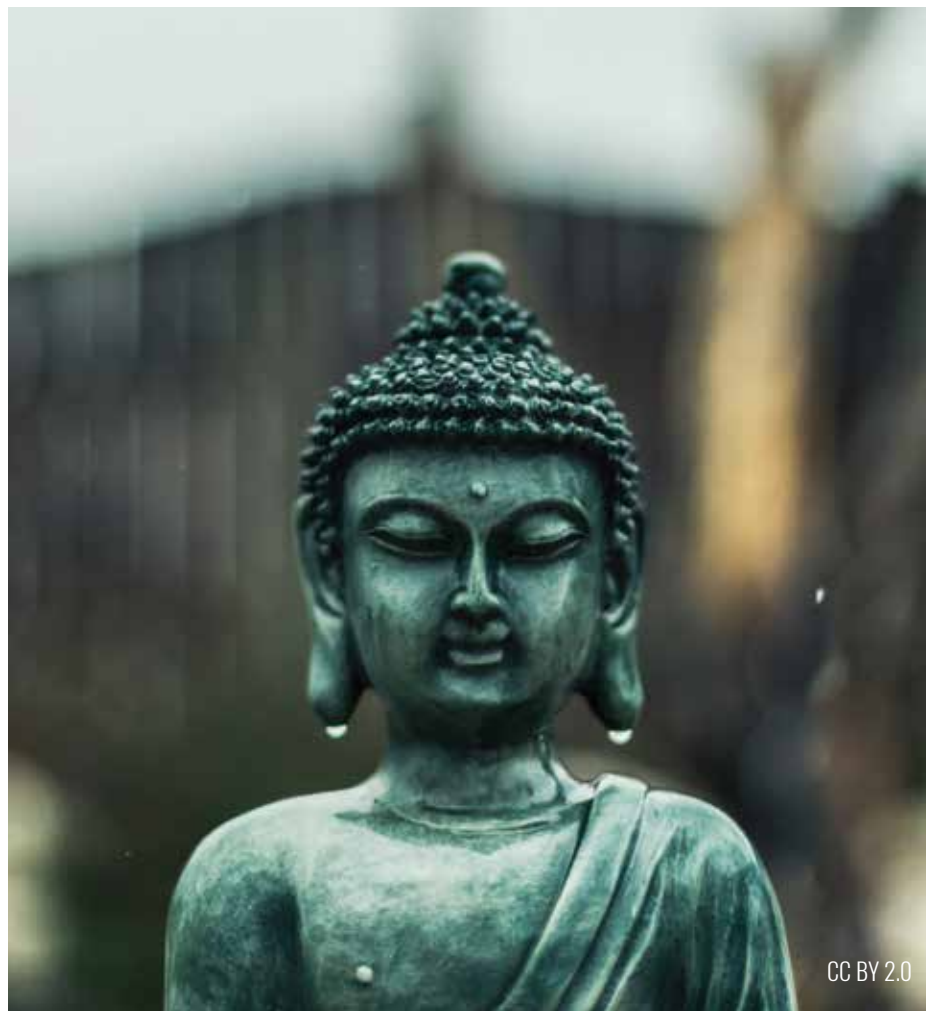
1) Rethink your definition of meditation. Meditation isn’t about “not thinking;” it’s about cultivating a healthy perspective on our thoughts. During meditation we’re learning to tame and enhance our minds, not stifle and silence them.

2) Get physical. Be as healthy as you can by considering what you eat and getting plenty of exercise with adequate recovery time. Research from the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School suggests that a consistent sleep schedule significantly increases overall energy, which means when your alarm goes off you’re rested enough to get up and meditate.

3) Be Nice. The bottom line is, if you behave in ways that hurt others by lying, stealing or manipulating, for example, it’s unlikely that you’ll want to sit quietly with yourself. Furthermore, you’ll find it difficult to concentrate. If you’re serious about meditating, be kind.



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4) Stop being so busy. This is our biggest task in the 21st century; ironically, this advice comes from *The Stages of Meditation*, a text that dates back to 750 A.D. Modern life is busy, but we don’t need to make ourselves even busier.

Here are some helpful guidelines:

-Get clear about your goals, and let your decisions reflect them. If your goal is being less busy, narrow your commitments down to the essentials.

-Stop multitasking. “Do one thing at a time – mindfully,” is a classic meditation instruction, yet in this age of social media and email, it can seem like an impossible challenge. The solution? Stop fooling yourself; multitasking makes you feel like you’re getting more done, but in truth you’re being less productive. Try checking emails, social media and texts only during designated times of the day.

The above advice lays the foundation for a solid meditation practice. Still, there’s one more piece dealing with the deeper aspects of our humanity: learning to be patient and kind with ourselves.

Tibetan Buddhist lama Dr. Lozang Jamspal underscores this importance by asking, “Without patience, how can one ever meditate well?” Be patient with yourself as you learn to meditate.

Treat yourself like a child who’s trying to learn something exciting and unfamiliar. Expect to get off track – it’s a part of learning, not a sign of failure. Imagine a child learning to ride a bike. You can get frustrated when she falls off or you can pick up her bike, dust off her knees, and give her a loving push. It will take practice for her to learn to be steady, but if she feels loved and supported, she won’t avoid the challenge – and she might even enjoy it along the way.

For the past 16 years, Megan Mook has immersed herself in the study of Buddhist philosophy and meditation, living and studying in monastic communities in the Zen, Theravada, and Tibetan traditions. She holds a master’s degree in Buddhist Studies and teaches meditation and yoga in New York City.

This story was adapted from one that first appeared in the summer 2015 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.