I had the pleasure and honor of leading a few exercise classes at camp this year. A number of people requested handouts and I promised a summary of what I presented. Here’s to you, Gino and Ron!

It is a luxury to exercise at camp—two full hours to move, stretch, and meditate before eating a breakfast that someone else prepares. At home, I take the time as often as I can and for the days when time is constrained, as much as I am able. This group of exercises is gleaned from various sources. They provide variety of movement to open the chakras and facilitate the flow of energy. While I utilize various exercises from Qi Gong, Yoga, Do-In, and Brain Gym, I also incorporate a conscientious connection with my heritage.

I start my day with a salute to my parents, and with overall activities, as suggested in this article. The next issue of *Macrobiotics Today* will continue with detailed exercises.

**INSPIRATION**

This is my dad connection. I read something uplifting.

My parents are spiritual people; my dad a minister, and I love to begin my day as he did, reading an inspirational book, whether the Holy Book or a book of wisdom from another sage. At camp, I shared a message from the Dalai Lama, “Breathe in, cherish yourself. Breathe out, cherish the world.” I find his messages to be appropriate whether at camp, at home, inside or outside.

**WATER**

This is my mom connection. I drink a cup of hot water.

Boiled water (that is still comfortably hot) is soothing to the digestive tract. If a person drinks it first thing in the morning, soon after arising and before eating anything else, there are a number of benefits.

1. Water hydrates the body. After fasting all night, the body needs some water.

2. Warm water on an empty stomach can help the bowels move. Warm water is gentle on the digestive system.

3. Our bodies are 70% water. We need water on a regular basis to help the mind, brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, etc. Unfortunately, many of us are dehydrated in our inner tissues. According to F. Batmanghelidg, M.D. in his book, *Your Body’s Many Cries for Water*, many symptoms from bodily pain to allergies to arthritis are related to a lack of water. Drinking water is a good habit.

4. Boiling water changes it somehow, although I don’t know the scientific analysis, and perhaps this is anecdotal. I heard a story of how boiled water hydrated the body better than water that was not boiled. The person
said it didn’t matter if the water was hot or not; you could boil the water and cool it before drinking.

5. Boiling water purifies it, especially if the source is not pure. This is probably more important camping or in places without adequate sanitation.

Personally, I began this habit over ten years ago. My days start better with boiled water than without. I think of my mom as I drink a cup of warm-to-hot water. When I was in high school, my mom went into the hospital for GI surgery. Her doctor recommended that she drink warm water first thing in the morning to help in the recovery. She urged that I do so to, if nothing else, to help prevent constipation. Water is the source of life, and while the above list supplies all the other reasons to drink water, I love the connection with my mother.

**Brain Gym Exercises**

These exercises connect me with my children. They also remind me of balance. Brain Gym is a therapy used by clinicians to help kids regain motor skills, enhance learning, and achieve a balance between brain and body. Sometimes it is referred to as “Educational Kinesiology.”

I attended a workshop for home schooling parents to help enhance learning for their students/kids. At the workshop, the presenter taught many exercises besides this group of four. Some were similar to Do-In, where we pinched our ears. Others were like yoga stretches, where we extended and balanced arms and legs. All were fun and invigorating.

This group of four is the standard four-group series called PACE by Brain Gym. I have used them many times when one or another of the kids had trouble with a particular subject. We paused, exercised, and then returned to study. Each time, I was impressed with how well my child calmed down and was able to focus. These exercises are easy and I often find myself doing a Hook-Up for the simple reason that it feels great!

1. **Drink water.** The brain is up to 90% water. Water, or lack of it, affects concentration. To start this group of four exercises, take a sip of water.

2. **Brain Buttons.** This exercise gently stimulates the arteries from heart to brain and provides a fresh dose of oxygen. The hand over the navel is placed over the gravitational center of the body.

   ![Brain Buttons](image)

   **Navel**

   Spread thumb and index finger. Place thumb and index finger under collar bone on each side of sternum. Gently press. At the same time, place other hand over naval. Gently press. Do for one minute or so, and then switch hands.

3. **Cross Crawl.** This exercise moves the big joints, big muscles, shoulders and hips. There are three axis of balance in body—left/right, up/down, and front/back. This exercise connects them all, crossing the mid-line of the body, and coordinates the brain with the body.

   Place right hand on left knee. Remove, put left hand on right knee. Repeat this motion in a slow marching rhythm for a number of rounds. For interest, vary how you cross the body, such as touching hand to opposite foot, or touching elbow to opposite knee. You can also get more active by moving hand to back of body and touching back of opposite foot. Children like to be vigorous, but gentle movement is sufficient to bring balance and awareness.

4. **Hook Up.** This exercise follows Cross Crawl and returns the body to center. It connects the opposite sides of the body, realigns it to wholeness, and calms the mind.

   ![Hook Up](image)
Stand or sit. Cross right ankle over left. Cross right wrist over left. Flip hands so palms face each other. Clasp palms and interlock fingers. Bring hands over center of chest, resting over heart. Breathe evenly for a minute or so.

Variation to get into the same position. Extend arms to front, perpendicular to floor and parallel to each other, at shoulder height, with the palms facing each other. Rotate palms so backs of hands face each other. Cross wrists. Clasp hands and interlock fingers. Bend elbows and tuck clasped hands towards chest, resting over heart. Cross one ankle over the other. Breathe evenly for a minute or so.

PACE means Positive (Hook-Up), Active (Cross Crawl), Clear (Brain Buttons), and Energetic (Water). For more information, see www.braingym.org.

**Yin and Yang Exercises**

These two exercises connect me with my macrobiotic roots, although I first encountered them in classes other than macrobiotic circles. Bob Carr linked them in my mind to yin and yang, and I love to start exercise routines with the reminder of yin and yang, vertical and horizontal, and heaven and earth forces.

**Basic Macrobiotic Cooking**

*Vertical and horizontal exercises.*
follow movement.

4. Flow with the rhythm, inhaling and exhaling comfortably. Increase side-to-side movement and rotation as is comfortable.

5. Feel tension ease away. This movement stretches the vertebrae, opens the shoulders and hips, and increases circulation.

6. Some people move into a vigorous side-to-side rotation with arms flailing the body, hitting kidneys in lower back and above the lungs in front. (Lung point 1, in acupuncture). Do what is comfortable. Gradually reduce movement and return to center.

7. Place palms over navel to gather energy into the center of the body and let breath return to normal.

**Body Tap—Gather Energy**

This exercise connects me with myself. It aligns the meridians and chakras, and is a complete energetic exercise. This version comes from Qi Gong and involves the entire body. It can be done within minutes. In fact, it will probably take you longer to read the following description than to do the exercise!

1. Rub hands. There is a small chakra, or energy point, in the center of each palm. To start the exercise, rub your palms together. This generates warmth in the hands and energy in the chakras.

2. Tap with kindness. Tap the body, in the following manner: use the flat of the fingers (not fingertips or fists) and use the entire finger under first and second knuckles. Tap the body with a gentle wake-up fashion. You are not tickling, as fingertips would tend to do; not are you beating yourself up, as fists would tend to do. You are giving yourself energy and love.

   Think of how you would pat a child on the back, who has done something worthy of praise. Use the same approach for yourself. In addition, if you find any part of your body that is sore, you can spend more time there. Think of how you gently care for yourself, and pat yourself with kindness to feel better. These are wonderful attitudes to generate.

3. Tap left arm. After warming palms, use right hand to tap the left side. Tap the outside of the left hand, then tap up the outside of the arm towards the shoulder (left hand palm is down). When you get to the shoulder, turn left hand palm up so that you can tap down the inside of the arm to the palm. Repeat. Left hand palm down and tap up the arm on the outside; left hand palm up and tap down the arm on the inside.

4. Tap right arm. Repeat the same

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—Julia Ferre

**NEW BOOK**

French Meadows Cookbook
Julia Ferre

Palm down outside

Palm up inside

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Includes recipes by Cornelia Aihara, Annemarie Colbin, PhD, Rebecca Wood, Meredith McCarty, Yvette De Langre, Laura Stec, Bob Carr, David and Cynthia Briscoe, Lenore Baum, Dawn Pallavi, Melanie Waxman, Susamme Jensen, Packy Conway, Barb Jurecki-Humphrey, Susan Waxman, Lisa Valantine, and Ginat and Sheldon Rice

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steps on the right arm, using left hand to tap. Notice than when you finish step 3, the right hand ends at palm. Switch so the left hand taps. Tap up the arm on the outside with the right palm down; down the arm on the inside with the palm up.

5. Clue to remember directions. The heart meridian extends from the heart to the palms, and we trace this direction in this exercise. Remember, love flows from the heart to our palms, especially when we give to others with open hands.

6. Tap belly. Tap the navel area. This brings Chi (energy) into the center of the body.

7. Full body loop. Tap around the body from navel, up to head, down back of head to shoulders, below shoulders to kidney area, down hips and outside back of legs, to feet, to inside legs, to return to navel. This is a big loop. Specifics follow.

7a. Tap up to head. From belly, tap up front of torso, as quick or as complete as desired. Be gentle around the breasts. Tap jaw, teeth area, around eyes and nose as desired. The first time I do this exercise in the morning, I usually do a quick once-over. However, if I have a chance to do a second round, I usually do a more thorough in-depth tapping. Both feel great! If you know Do-In or other self-massage techniques, incorporate that information.

7b. Tap down back of head to shoulders. Tap the scalp and neck thoroughly. It refreshes the brain and eases any tension in neck. Pay attention to shoulders too. Many people have stiffness in shoulders, and while it is not necessary to pound, use appropriate strength to help yourself. Tap down the upper back as far as your arms can reach.

7c. Tap below shoulders to kidney area. You will have to switch your approach to your back, tucking your arms up from behind to reach up the shoulders, where you left off from step 7b. Tap the mid-back area as best as you can, behind the heart and rib cage. When you get to the kidney area, give your kidneys some good love. Be gentle! The kidneys are delicate and really do best with kind pats. Avoid beating yourself up!

7d. Tap down hips and outside back of legs. Trace the direction from kidneys down to hips to back of legs. This is a normal flow and easy to remember. Tap in this direction, all the way down.

7e. Tap feet and inside legs to return to navel. Tap the tops of the feet. Since you are standing, it is not practical to massage the soles of the feet, but do your best to give the toes some attention. Then tap the inside of the legs and return to navel center.

7f. Repeat loop.

8. Gather energy. Finish with hands over belly. Place the palm of one hand over navel and stack the other palm on top of the first. Women place the right hand on belly first; men place the left hand first. The hand placement is different for men and women to balance male and female energy. Breathe deep and feel Chi gather inside the core or your body.

Order of use:
By the way, I don't necessarily follow the order of exercises as written here. This is generally what I do when time allows.

1. Drink water and read at the same time. Include Brain Buttons.
2. Go for a walk outside.
3. Return home and begin exercising, starting with Yin and Yang exercises.
4. Cross Crawl and Hook-up.
5. Body tap.
6. Specific exercises from yoga and/or Qigong. The next issue will detail some of these exercises.
7. Meditation. Chant to close.

If time is constrained, I make time for items 1, 5, and 7. I always finish with chanting OM.
Peace.

Julia Ferré is author of Basic Macrobiotic Cooking and French Meadows Cookbook. She is a Reiki practitioner and can be contacted at juliaferre@yahoo.com.

Corrections

Kaare Bursell's website was listed incorrectly in the last issue. The correct site is: www.alchemycalpages.com.

Kerry Loeb’s e-mail was given incorrectly in the last issue. The correct e-mail is: kerryloeb@comcast.net.