

A serene spa environment featuring a large white hot tub in the foreground filled with water and floating pink and yellow rose petals. In the background, a stone fireplace with a warm fire is visible, along with a window looking out onto a lush green landscape with orange trees. Several lit candles in glass holders are scattered around the tub, creating a relaxing atmosphere.

Good Health

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Jewish News of Greater Phoenix



On the cover: The Alvadora Spa at the Royal Palms Resort and Spa in Phoenix.
Photo courtesy of Royal Palms

Good Health—Mind•Body•Spirit is a special section of Jewish News of Greater Phoenix. Edited by Marilyn Hawkes and designed by Becky Globokar. For additional copies and advertising information, contact Jaime Stern, 602-870-9470.

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Good Health

BODY • MIND • SPIRIT

About this time of year, most Valley residents are settling in for the long, hot summer. The weather can be challenging on many fronts: It's too hot to exercise outside, you don't feel like cooking, and staying inside gets a little old after a while. Our lives are thrown out of balance. But that's no reason to despair, there are a lot of ways to bring back equilibrium.

In this Jewish News Good Health — Body, Mind, Spirit special section, you'll read about Valley summer spa specials, including relaxing massages and soothing facials; krav maga, a self-defense and conditioning martial arts

discipline; an uplifting weight loss success story; healthy eating ideas; and a counselor's advice for emotional health.

However you look for ways to bring balance to your lives, we hope this Good Health — Body, Mind, Spirit special section gives you some ideas about how to get started.

L'shalom,

Marilyn Hawkes

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Coming Soon!

Bargain bliss

Valley resorts offer summer spa specials

JENNIFER GOLDBERG
Special Sections Editor

Summer in the Valley means lots of things: high temperatures, monsoons and the annual slowdown in tourism. Fortunately for those of us who call the Valley home, this means that summer is an excellent time to get a discount rate at some of the best resort spas in town. Here are some top spa specials to keep you beautiful and relaxed through the summer months.

Alvadora Spa at Royal Palms Resort and Spa

Alvadora Spa has a diverse lineup of summer specials to fit a wide variety of budgets and interests. For a small taste of relaxation, try the spa's weekend morning tai chi (7 a.m. Saturdays) and yoga (7 a.m. Sundays) sessions by the resort pool. Each session is \$15. The spa is also offering a 50-minute classic massage or 50-minute signature facial for \$99. Finally, for the full spa experience, try the "Taste of Alvadora Spa Experience," a new summer package that includes a body scrub; back, neck and shoulder massage; facial; manicure or pedicure; and revitalizing scalp treatment, all for \$313.

Royal Palms Resort and Spa is located at 5200 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix. Call 602-977-6400 or visit royalpalmsotel.com/phoenix-spas-alvadora.php.

Arizona Biltmore Spa

The "Rockin' Summer at the Arizona Biltmore" promotion going on at the resort also applies to its salon and spa services. The rock 'n' roll-themed treatments include the "Blue Moon" pedicure (\$65), the "I Want to Hold Your Hand" manicure (\$55), the "Turn Back Time" facial (\$250), and the "Rockin' Body" package, including a body polish, body wrap, body massage and facial massage (\$175).

The Arizona Biltmore is located at 2400 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix. Call 602-381-7632 or visit arizonabiltmore.com/Spa/Default.aspx.

The Centre for Well-Being at The Phoenician

In honor of its 25th anniversary, The Phoenician is offering a number of specials, including one for its Centre for Well-Being spa: purchase two spa treatments for the same day and get 25 percent off both of them. The special is available Mondays through Thursdays through Sept. 30.

The Phoenician is located at 6000 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale. Call 480-423-2452 or visit thephoenician.com/spa-specials.

Joya Spa at Montelucia Resort & Spa

Joya Spa at Scottsdale's Montelucia Resort & Spa is offering a "Summer Wine Down" \$99 special on several of its spa treatments. Choose from a 50-minute custom massage, a 50-minute Desert Cactus Facial, a 50-minute Transformation Facial or a 50-minute Full Body Reflexology session; you'll get the treatment plus a complimentary glass of wine for extra relaxation. Regular price on the treatments is \$149-\$159 each. The special is good Tuesdays through Fridays after 3 p.m.

Montelucia Resort & Spa is located at 4949 E. Lincoln Drive. Call (888) 627-3010 or visit montelucia.com/joya-spa.

Spa at Sanctuary Camelback Mountain Resort and Spa

Summer is the time to double up on luxury at Sanctuary Camelback Mountain Resort and Spa; guests can get a half-price 60-minute massage, facial or body treatment with the purchase of a full-price 60-minute spa treatment. The special is available Mondays through Thursdays and both treatments must be done the same day. Also, the spa's 60-minute Therapeutic Massage, Emperor Facial or Sanctuary Jewel Facial, usually \$150 each, will be available for \$120 Mondays through Thursdays and \$130 Fridays through Sundays. Specials run through Aug. 29.

Sanctuary Camelback Mountain Resort and Spa is located at 5700 E. McDonald Drive, Paradise Valley. Call 480-607-2326 or visit sanctuaryoncamelback.com/spa/spa.html.



Joya, the spa at the Montelucia Resort & Spa, has several summer specials.

Photo courtesy of Montelucia Resort & Spa

The Spa at Talking Stick Resort

Residency has its privileges: The Spa at Talking Stick Resort's "Luxury for Locals" specials give Arizona residents a special rate on three of the spa's treatments. Choose from the "Here Comes the Sun" Simply Essential Massage, the Brilliant Body Polish and the Complexion Essential Facial — each one is \$89 for a 60-minute session, Sundays through Thursdays. The spa is also offering a \$58 "Summertime Toes" pedicure special. All summer prices are good through Sept. 30.

Talking Stick Resort is located at 9800 E. Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale. Call 480-850-4065 or visit talkingstickresort.com/spa.aspx.

Fighting in the street

REACT Defense offers training to foil real-life attacks

SALVATORE CAPUTO
Assistant Managing Editor

If you call krav maga one of the martial arts when you're talking to Jay Ackerman, he'll say something like, "It's a military self-defense system, it doesn't have an arts side."

There are no points for grace of movement when you are in the process of staving off an attacker, Ackerman tells Jewish News. The only thing that matters, he adds, is stopping the attack.

"This is not about sport, it's about self-defense," he says. "It's a system that's very easily learned."

Ackerman ought to know. He is the chief instructor at REACT Defense Systems, which is home of the Southwest Regional Training Center of Krav Maga Worldwide, an organization with more than 240 licensed schools that teach the Israeli-developed self-defense system under the direction of Darren Levine. (Levine is ranked as a sixth-degree black belt, and displays a founder's diploma from the late Imi Lichtenfeld, who developed krav maga for the Israel Defense Forces.)

The basic idea of krav maga is to make instinctive reactions to an attack into simple, but effective moves to combat the assailant, he explains.

At his 8,400-square-foot training facility in north Phoenix, Ackerman has his son, Josh, a head instructor at REACT Defense, attempt to choke him. The younger Ackerman grabs his dad's throat with both hands and begins applying pressure.

"What would your reaction be? Where would your hands go?" he asks. Naturally,



Chief Instructor Jay Ackerman, left, demonstrates his technique to disarm a gun-wielding opponent (Head Instructor Josh Ackerman), which they teach as part of their Tactical Black training.

Photo courtesy of REACT Defense Systems

they would go upward to try to wrench the assailant's grip, which becomes a test of strength that you could lose.

The move taught by Krav Maga Worldwide proponents would be to bring your hands up sharply and swiftly to the inside of the assailant's arms, pushing them off with a blow that leverages upper body strength, he explains while demonstrating.

"The transfer of knowledge is very quick," he says. "It relies on muscle memory ... and it doesn't take years of training to be proficient."

The most important part, he says, is that it "works under stress."

The Krav Maga Worldwide training that REACT Defense offers is based on simulating real-life attacks, both in speed and ferocity.

"It's scenario-based, putting you into situations on the ground," he says.

Ackerman lifts a piece of

gear that looks like a leaden diaper. It's a shield that instructors wear against groin kicks as the students practice.

The students are putting "full kicks and knees into the guy they're training with," he says.

Ackerman, who started training in martial arts in 1977, holds black belts in several of them. Certified to train both civilians and law enforcement in these techniques, he is also

NRA certified as a firearms instructor.

REACT Defense (REACT stands for "Reality Environmental Adrenal Conditioning Training") is a system that Ackerman created to emphasize hand-to-hand combat, based on the Israeli system. He supplements that program with Tactical Black, which includes firearms training as part of one's self-defense.

He also developed ALEET (Advanced Level Explosive Endurance Training), a fitness program that incorporates sports-specific training "for professional athletes, law enforcement, military, and the average person who wants to lose weight and get into incredible shape," according to reactdefense.com.

REACT Defense has training facilities in Phoenix, Glendale and Chandler, serving about 1,000 students (about half of them women) and offering more than 100 classes a week.

In addition to the classes, REACT Defense provides seminars for civilians, police and military, such as the Active Shooter Hostage Seminar (which in the wake of the Newtown, Conn., massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Ackerman notes, is drawing strong interest from private schools), Rape Prevention Seminar, the Airplane Seminar (for learning to fight in airliners and other confined spaces), among others.

REACT Defense is a family affair, co-owned by Ackerman, his wife, Joy, who is also an instructor, and their son Josh. Call 602-485-5728 for information.



Joy and Jay Ackerman, who own REACT Defense Systems, stand before official Krav Maga Worldwide gear sold at their Phoenix facility.

Photo by Salvatore Caputo

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'Strong is the new skinny'

MARILYN HAWKES
Staff Writer

Financial adviser Debbi Lavinsky says she's had a couple of wake-up calls in her life. But the real wake-up call came after she saw the photos from her daughter's 2009 wedding. "It didn't look like me — at least, who I thought I looked like," she says.

About six months before the wedding, Lavinsky, the wife of Beth El Congregation's Rabbi Arthur Lavinsky, had started running and lost 10 pounds. But after seeing the photos, she says, "That's when I got more serious about losing [weight]. I decided it was time to start focusing on me." All told, she had gained more than 70 pounds.

On a friend's recommendation, Lavinsky started using HCG (human chorionic gonadotropin) drops and went on a 500-calorie-a-day diet. "It forces you into becoming a clean eater. For me, sugar is crack. I cannot have one cookie, I have to eat a whole box of cookies." HCG helps curb your appetite, she says.

With the diet came smaller portions, cutting out junk food and drinking lots of water. The diet had three phases: The first phase lasts 26 days and allows 500 calories a day; the second phase lasts three to four weeks, at which time you can increase your calorie intake and start reintroducing foods that were off-limits in the first phase; and the third phase incorporates all the foods you were eating before, but in much smaller portions. In the first three or four weeks, she lost about 25 pounds "But the challenge when you stop taking [HCG] is keeping the mind-set and not going back to your old ways," she says.

Along the way, Lavinsky discovered the Fitbit, a wireless activity tracker worn on the body that reports activity back to a computer or other digital device. The Fitbit helps keep her accountable and motivates her to move more, she says.

Next, Lavinsky ramped up her exercise regime. She started working out with a personal trainer and after participating in the 2010 Susan G. Komen Walk, decided to run in the half-marathon event of the 2011 P.F. Chang's Rock 'n' Roll Marathon. "It was quite an accomplishment," Lavinsky says. "I can check that off my bucket list."

But that didn't stop Lavinsky from competing in other endurance events. At another Komen event, she did the running portion of a triathlon as part of a team. "Here were all these women competing — some were overweight, some were going through chemo, some were bald, some were survivors," she says. "After I did the first one, I was hooked." So far, she's participated in seven triathlon events. Last Thanksgiving, she had a top 10 finish for women in her age group. Lavinsky is 56.

For the past four years, Lavinsky has also been taking Pilates classes. "As I've lost weight, Pilates has totally reshaped my body," she says. Lavinsky, a former professional flutist, likes the mind-body connection that Pilates offers. "It's very much like playing and practicing my flute — breath control and using the abdominal muscles for breathing." She started doing Pilates three to five times a week and noticed major and rapid improvement.

At the beginning of this year, she decided to become a certified Pilates instructor and is currently halfway through the required student teaching.

There are many benefits to doing Pilates, Lavinsky says. "I



Debbi Lavinsky - Before



Debbi Lavinsky - After

Return to the basics of good nutrition

Jews and food. Everyone has an opinion, and many like to share it. In the face of so many often conflicting messages, we all want to make healthy choices. What I am encouraging is that you give yourself a break and return to the basics.

The key to healthful eating is whole, simple food that you've recognized since childhood. What may surprise you is how the Jewish tradition of blessings can help guide you to a healthy and meaningful relationship with food.

As Jews, why should we care about health and nutrition? We gain insight from the great medieval rabbi, philosopher, and

physician, Moses Maimonides. In the Mishneh Torah, Maimonides writes that it is a man's duty to avoid whatever is injurious to the body and cultivate habits conducive to health and vigor. Nutritionally, eating real food is the best way to achieve Maimonides' prescription. Food is our daily

medicine.

Our bodies need the right balance of vitamins, minerals, fats, carbohydrates (sugar) and protein each day. Supplements may help with nutrient deficiencies, but may also cause serious injury if taken in excess. So-called "superfoods" may indeed provide some essential nutrients, but there's no magic food, no magic pill, and no magic program that can replace eating a well-rounded diet.

The Jewish tradition of saying blessings before eating is a perfect method to lead us to healthier habits. The benefit comes from making us pause before eating, and using the time to think about what we are about to eat. And no, this isn't a practice reserved for the strictly observant Jew. Anyone can say a blessing, and everyone can reap its benefits. Saying blessings is something that both young and old can master.

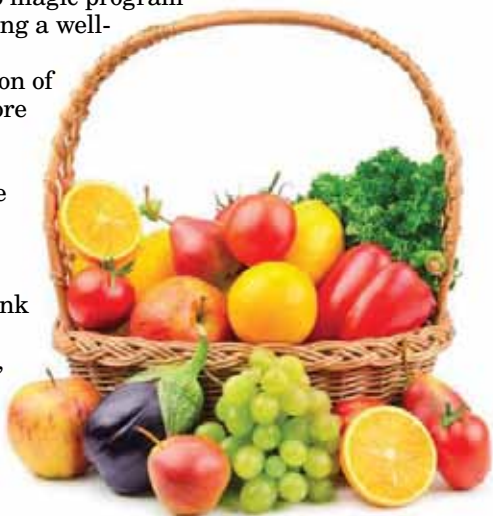
Saying a blessing means that we must think about where the food comes from. Most of us are familiar with the blessings recited for bread (*hamotzi*) or wine (*hagafen*), but there are also blessings for foods that grow in the ground, foods that grow on trees, and grains like rice, wheat and barley. There's even a

catch-all blessing for foods like sweets, meat and dairy. If we can't tell where the food came from, chances are it probably isn't healthy. And if you find yourself always using that catch-all blessing (*shehakol*), you're probably not eating enough fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Here's how it works. Before we eat, my family takes a moment to discuss what we're about to consume. We ask questions like: Where did it grow? What is the main ingredient? And then we decide what blessing is appropriate to say. My kids know that blessing our food is part of the meal.



Rachael Don



See "Nutrition" on Page S14



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Taking care of emotional health

How counseling can help

People are less reticent to visit a physician when something hurts than they are to seek out professional help for emotional pain. There is a perception that psychotherapy is only for those who are insane or those who can afford the luxury.

Good emotional health is also essential to a person's well-being. Excessive anxiety, stress and sadness also take their toll on human beings, diminishing their quality of life and impacting the body and spirit.

A professional counselor or therapist has a good listening ear, an understanding of how our own thoughts can contribute to the suffering brought on by life's challenges and knows ways to manage that suffering. Time spent with a good counselor is time well spent.

On a most basic level, it is beneficial for someone in emotional pain to have a safe place to talk openly and freely about his or her inner struggles and a compassionate and nonjudgmental person to talk to. A professional counselor is ethically bound to offer clients safety and confidentiality.

Above that, a counselor

can be counted on to have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, as well as the training and experience required to diagnose and treat emotional problems, like anxiety, depression and stress brought on by trauma. The art and science of healing

Maynard W. Bell



emotional suffering transcends simply giving "advice" and involves more than just listening.

Therapy works best, when there is a genuine connection between client and counselor. Consumers who are looking for a therapist should feel confident that they have found the right fit. A good therapeutic relationship has healing power in and of itself.

Consumers of psychotherapy should also be aware that there are many therapeutic modalities and more than one kind of credentialed therapist. Psychiatrists are not the

only qualified and credentialed mental health professionals. In today's market psychiatrists, medical doctors who can legally prescribe, are most often sought out when psychotropic medication is appropriate rather than for courses of "talk therapy."

Psychologists, counselors and clinical social workers are more often called on for the latter. In this article, I am using the terms "counselor" and "counseling" in their broadest sense. The current trend is toward cognitive behavioral therapy (which focuses on reducing unwanted emotions and dysfunctional behaviors associated with distorted beliefs rather than on how mental problems evolved), although many therapists still feel that increasing a client's self-awareness and insight into the roots of his or her problems is relevant to the healing process.

Emotional suffering may originate in the mind but it is felt in the body. From a physiological standpoint, an emotion is a convergence of bodily sensations (e.g. relaxation, arousal, feeling warm or cold, shortness of breath, heart palpitations, hyper-vigilance,

muscle tension, weakness or sluggishness), sometimes pleasant but often uncomfortable. Research substantiates that what we think or believe brings on the emotions that we feel, including unwanted uncomfortable emotions. Most often, distorted thoughts and beliefs are the source of emotional suffering. Therefore, learning skills to modify these thoughts is a primary goal of therapy. Be aware that different therapists may prescribe different paths to reducing unwanted emotions.

Another challenge that faces a client is to identify in the first place what he or she actually values in life. Helping clients to clarify what they really want from life is another service that therapists offer. Counselors can then serve as guides in building a road map toward realistic goals that are congruent with a client's core values.

Potential clients should also be aware that in most cases, accomplishing something in therapy is usually not an easy or instantaneous process. The therapeutic relationship demands that the therapist offers the client ethical compassionate care. At the same time, the client must be open to change and willing to do some hard work.

Ask most therapists what

their job is and most would say that it is to facilitate change and reduce emotional suffering. Unlike a surgeon or a dentist, a professional treating emotional issues offers no anesthesia. In psychotherapy, the trite adage often really does apply: "No pain, no gain!" At the same time, it is the therapist's duty to support and keep the client safe during the therapeutic journey.

In the end, if therapy accomplishes what it should, the client will have learned new skills for managing unwanted emotions, be suffering less, living life more fully, realizing more of his or her potential, and moving toward his or her life goals.

In the formative stage of my career in counseling, an important mentor of mine, described therapy as a "pilgrimage" toward oneself. I would invite anyone who is suffering emotionally and feeling ill-equipped to manage the issues that they are facing in life to embark on that pilgrimage.

Maynard W. Bell, LPC, is rabbi emeritus of Temple Solel and is currently in private practice as a therapist in Scottsdale. Contact him at 480-340-6556, or maynard@bell-lpc.com.

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Lavinsky

Continued from Page S10

have more stamina, much more strength and flexibility ... and my balance is much improved. I feel better, and I have a lot of energy." She also has more self-confidence and enjoys fitting into smaller sizes, she says.

"I've had people walk right past me and they honestly don't recognize me."

After she gets her Pilates certification, Lavinsky says she won't quit her day job of the last 18 years as a financial adviser. She enjoys the creative process of financial planning. Coming up with the plan is easy, she says. "The tough part is getting people to implement [the plan] and stick to it. It's like a diet. A lot of people get very enthusiastic about saving and investing money and then they get off track. They drift off. I totally get that."

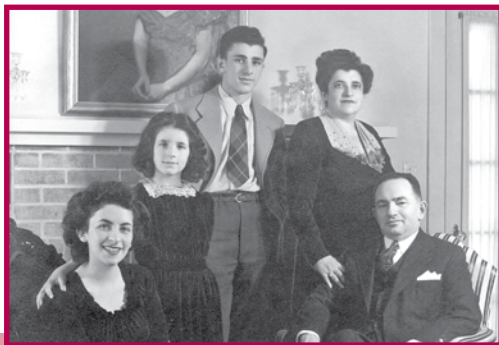
Lavinsky was recently elected director of Central Phoenix Women, a women's leadership group, and was appointed to the Governor's Advisory Board on Aging. The board tackles legislation issues concerning aging, Alzheimer's disease and other health matters and the mature workforce. "We're trying to come up with ideas and solutions for the senior tsunami that's coming, so we make recommendations to the governor," she says. "I'm hoping that I can make a positive impact."

In her spare time, Lavinsky enjoys golfing with her husband. A few years back, he joked with her about all the "middle-age" activities she did, including playing mahjong and golfing. So that Father's Day she bought him a package of golf lessons. "He loved it," she says. They golf together when they can and play while on vacation.

For Lavinsky, changing her lifestyle has taken about three to four years. "It's not a pill. It's not a quick fix," she says. Part of her challenge now is her body image. "I still think I'm bigger than I am."

She hit a major milestone this month: a total weight loss of more than 70 pounds. "I'm in better shape than I was in my 30s. My focus [now] is 'strong is the new skinny.'"

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Nutrition

Continued from Page S11

As the kids get more comfortable, we also take time to discuss nutrition. We learn things like how the iron-rich chickpeas in the salad enable oxygen to be carried through our bodies, or how the trout is high in vitamin B12, which is essential for healthy nerves. Armed with this information, it's exciting to watch the children making healthier food choices. The blessing gives us a chance to appreciate the connections between food, Judaism and our health.

I recently founded a Jewish mindful eating and nutrition program called the Blooming Plate. With the help of a Valley Beit Midrash Start Me Up! grant, we bring this message of healthy, meaningful eating to children across the Valley. To learn more, or to start a Blooming Plate group with your children or organization, please contact me at bloomingplate@gmail.com, or through our website, bloomingplate.org.

Rachael Don has her MBA and a master's of health services administration, but her true passion is nutrition. She is currently studying nutrition at Arizona State University to become a registered dietitian. Rachael lives in Scottsdale with her husband and four young sons. For a comprehensive tutorial on blessing food, visit jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Brachot.html.



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