

How to get a longer stick

If you are a busy, working mom, like me, you know, at the end of the day, the one who gets the short end of the stick is you. And if you are a single mom to boot, like me, you know that stick gets even shorter. I manage to bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan and take care of every other detail in my life — except for me. Besides my peace of mind, my hair and nails suffer just as badly. So if I have overgrown roots and shaggy cuticles on the outside, what the heck must be going on the inside?

“Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The effects of stress can be positive, keeping us alert and ready to avoid danger. On the other hand, stress can also become negative. This occurs when a person faces continuous challenges without relief or relaxation between challenges and physical illnesses related to stress develop as a result.” — www.dealwithstress.com

Stress is a major factor contributing to the cause of irritable bowel syndrome, heart attacks, high blood pressure, ulcers, rheumatoid arthritis, insomnia, chronic fatigue syndrome, obesity, muscle aches and, last but not least — yup, you guessed it — cancer. Stress weakens the immune system, and when that happens, we open the door to Pandora's Box of illnesses. So what can we do to make ourselves relax and feel better?

Put yourself at the top of the “to do” list. Taking care of yourself is not selfish. People often think of massages and facials as decadent indulgences, rather than essential [health](#) management. Both improve lymph flow, which rids the body of bacteria, viruses and toxins, which in turn helps to reduce fatigue and stress and helps the body maintain its natural defense system. It also boosts the immune system, reduces the heart rate, [lowers blood pressure](#) and improves blood circulation and overall skin health.

“Unfortunately, a lot of people only think of massage when they want to pamper themselves when, really, we need to reduce stress on a continual basis as preventative medicine,” said Nicolena Inniss, massage therapist at Deyo Studio. “More and more, we are seeing the use of integrated medicine, where the goal is to treat the mind, body and spirit, all at the same time.”

Karen Halkey, Deyo Studio's resident esthetician, specializes in organic facials

that help detoxify the body and [nourish](#) the skin.

"I incorporate aromatherapy into all of my treatments," Halkey said. "Essential oils have a powerful effect on our entire sensory system, and have been proven to have a deeply calming effect on the limbic system in our brain, the area that controls our emotions, including our 'flight or fight' response."

One of the hardest things to do is just be and accept who you are and where you are at this moment. I found my way back to yoga and my favorite teacher, Raina Nemeth, this past year.

"Yoga not only has the ability to change the body, but it changes the mind," Nemeth said. "Yoga retrains the brain so that instead of reacting to stress with tension, we actually learn to soften around those emotional and physical stressors, creating a sense of calm and strength."

She shared a moving story with me about her experience working with a friend who passed away from [stage 4 breast cancer](#) this past January. When she first started working with her, it was her second time being diagnosed.

"She could barely walk, but we kept doing yoga at her home, and she actually became cancer-free for six months," Nemeth said. "The third time she was diagnosed, it was too late, but before she passed, I sat with her and we did yoga breathing together, as by this time she had lost her sight. She knew she was going to die and was afraid."

After some time, just breathing together and talking about our universal light, she told me she could see a rainbow and that she knew she would be OK. She passed two days later."

I'm not sure what to say after that, except stop neglecting you before that shortening stick becomes a nail.

Barbara Deyo, owner of Deyo Studio for face and body, is an internationally acclaimed makeup artist, having groomed the faces of Paul [McCartney](#), Bob Seger, Kerrie Washington, Shaun Robinson and more. She has been named Best of the Best by Allure, Hour, Real Detroit and WDIV-TV. Deyo Studio is located at 576 N. Old Woodward Avenue, second floor, in Birmingham. Contact her at (248) 203-1222 or go to www.deyostudio.com.