



OCTOBER 2010

Dear Friends,

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**Keep Moving**

The days are getting shorter and darker, the weather is colder and wetter, and you might even have a case of the sniffles.

In the fall, it's tempting to just succumb to a good book and a warm cup of tea. It's certainly nice to just cuddle up with your family and watch the world go by this time of year.

But don't forget the magic of movement, the energy and immune-strengthening properties that come with practicing yoga, the beauty of a fall walk on a brisk day.

This month's Sadhaka will help you harness your energy, with a recipe for yummy black sesame and walnut balls that will keep you going, a reflection on spending time in the wilderness with your wee ones, and a yoga sequence that will help you build strength and fight illness.

We've also got an essay on overcoming breastfeeding challenges.

We wish you a magical fall, with a balance of movement and stillness, of energy and rest.

Fall is a transitional time when all that we have worked for during the growing seasons can be harvested. It is a time of celebration and joy as we share this abundance with our family and community. This receptivity and openness fills and prepares us to go into the dormancy of winter, so that we can balance and collect our energy for the following spring and summer.

When we are in rhythm with Nature she guides us in how to live. More of us are beginning to wake up to the necessity to connect with Nature for our very lives depend on her well-being. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Amma, my spiritual teacher, on the relationship between man and Nature:

"Man is not different from Nature. He is a part of Nature. The very existence of human beings on earth depends on Nature. In truth, we are not protecting Nature - it is Nature who protects us. Trees and plants, for example, are absolutely necessary for the purification of vital energy (the life force). Everyone knows that human beings cannot live in the desert. The reason is that there are no trees there to purify the vital energy. If atmospheric purification does not take place, the health of humans will deteriorate. Our lives are inextricably dependent on Nature; even a small change in Nature will affect our lives on this planet. Similarly, man's thoughts and actions have an effect on Nature. If the balance in Nature is lost, the harmony of human life will also be lost, and vice versa.

The one factor, which connects a human being to Nature, is the innate innocence within man. When we see a rainbow, or the waves of the ocean, do we still feel the innocent joy of a child? An adult who experiences a rainbow as being nothing but light waves will not know the joy and wonder of a child who sees a rainbow, or a child who is watching the waves of the ocean.

Faith in God is the best way to sustain this childlike innocence in man. He who has faith and devotion to God, which in turn stems from his innate innocence, beholds God in everything, in every tree and animal, in every aspect of Nature. This attitude enables him to live in perfect harmony, in tune with Nature. The never-ending stream of love that flows from a true believer towards the entire Creation will have a gentle, soothing effect on Nature. This love is the best protection of Nature.

As man's intellect and scientific knowledge grow, he should not forget the feelings of his heart, which enable him to live in accordance with Nature and her fundamental laws."

Sri Sri Mata Amritandanamayi Devi (Amma)

Let us embrace these qualities of faith and devotion and willingly receive the harvest that Nature provides for all.

Blessings of love,

Colette

## Connecting with Nature-- and Your Kids

By Jennifer Kakutani

"Here is this vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature, lying all around, with such beauty, and such affection for her children, as the leopard; and yet we are so early weaned from her breast to society, to that culture which is exclusively an interaction of man on man."



~ Henry D. Thoreau

It's Saturday, Jan. 1, 2010, and I've been waiting for this for a long time. For the time when we can drive a little ways out of the city, (without any car seat screaming) just she and me for a nice long walk in the woods surrounded by animals and plants and very few people.

I feel the intensity of the man on man experience living in a city. I want so dearly to get back to some meditative hiking and that kind of quiet that calms my ever-so-chatty mind.

Today, I gave it a try. Uncertain how much walking she would do and how much carrying (of her and the backpack) I would be doing, we ventured into the unknown.

Our choice destination for our mother/daughter hiking date was Tiger Mountain. We did the 1.5 mile loop around Tradition Lake which took us about 1.5 hrs. The great surprise to me was that she walked most of it (yes at one mile per hour)!

When we got home, I was also surprised at how much more focus the two of us had for our daily tasks. She played independently for a while in a relaxed manner. I was calm yet stimulated by images of the forest as I went about my household chores. So we did it again the next week. So far, she really looks forward to "going hiking," and I'm loving the return to an activity that rejuvenates me.

This is the time of year when I start to look forward to more time indoors: baking, crafting, or even being online. However, I'm reminded by my own words from last winter how beneficial it is for me and my child to have a regular date, outside in nature year round.

I run a parent and child outdoor program, but the challenge for me is to offer my daughter an intimate experience of solitude and quiet outside, just the two of us where she can lead the way . . . even if we don't venture outside the city limits, and just walk down the block to the local P Patch.

I often wonder if my three-year-old will ever know the type of play I did as a child, involving seemingly endless periods of time outside. I knew the wild areas in our neighborhood and beach intimately. My imagination and creativity ran wild. They felt like my very own special little places. As my daughter grows up in a city, I feel it is my responsibility to offer her regular opportunities to fall in love with the natural world, too.

Richard Louv, who wrote "Last Child in the Woods; Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder," said "Passion for nature does not arrive on a videotape or on a CD; passion is personal. Passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young; it travels along grass-stained sleeves to the heart. If we are going to save environmentalism and the environment, we must also save an endangered indicator species: the child in nature."

Here is one fabulous, but less known hike in our own backyard where you and

your child can lift some of that muddy earth! The Ponds of Discovery Park trail goes down past two cute ponds ending at a lovely larger one with lilies, ducks and red-winged blackbirds. It's my favorite habitat in the park and often quite magical. Bring little fish tank nets and plastic tubs to dip and see what you find. A fun outdoor read is "The Salamander Room" by Anne Mazer.

**Directions:** Enter the park through the main entrance on Government Way. Go past the Visitor Center parking lot and continue on the road downhill until it ends at the North Parking Lot. Park here. There are restrooms nearby. The hike is downhill from the parking lot about 1 mi. round-trip on a gravel path.

Begin the hike with your back towards the parking lot and face the large field. Walk down the paved road to the right of the field until you are close to the green bike path sign. On your right, you'll see a diagonal parking block marking a skinny gravel trail going downhill. Follow this trail down to see the ponds.

It's a good day for a stroller if you suspect climbing uphill with tired children will be tough, and bring a just-in-case-change-of-clothes!

Check out more ways to connect with nature together, including directions to Tiger Mountain, at [Kakutani's Petals and Moss](#) blog.

*Jennifer Kakutani is a wife, mother and founder of Itty Bitty Camps Seattle's [Outdoor Parent and Child Program](#).*

## Black Sesame and Walnut Balls for Energy

By Josie Zhuo, Lac, MTCM

Ingredients:

1 cup raw black sesame seeds  
1 cup raw walnuts  
3 tablespoons honey

- Toast the black sesame seeds in a frying pan or wok on low heat for 3 minutes (no oil added).
- Blend the seeds into a fine powder.
- Toast the walnuts in a frying pan or wok on medium heat for 5 minutes.
- Blend the walnuts into a fine powder.
- Mix the walnut and sesame powders together.
- Add honey to the powder and mix into a paste.
- Roll small balls out with your hands. Store in the refrigerator for future enjoyment. They go well with a cup of tea.



Walnuts:

Tone the kidneys and strengthens the back and knees.

Warm the lungs and help the kidneys to grasp Qi. This helps in cases of deficient lungs, chronic cough and wheezing.

Moisten the intestines and unblocks the bowels to decrease constipation.

Black Sesame Seeds:

· Nourish and fortifies the liver and kidneys. This helps in cases of deficiency of the liver and kidneys, with such symptoms as blurred vision, tinnitus and dizziness, and also helps patients recover after severe illnesses.

· Nourish the blood and extinguish wind. This helps ththose who experience headaches, dizziness and numbness due to blood deficiency.

· Moisten and lubricate the intestines. This helps relieve constipation due to dry intestines or blood deficiency.

This recipe can also be useful for those seeking to lose weight. Eat one or two

balls with a cup of tea one hour before meals. It is nourishing and filling, so you won't overeat.

*This recipe is from Zhuo of Four Seasons Acupuncture and Herbs at 1326 N. 45th St., Seattle, WA. 98103, (206) 633-0346.*

## Yoga to Fight Stress and Build Immunity

By Colette Crawford, RN, BSN

I was a single parent of two small children and in nursing school when I began to take yoga more seriously. It would have been an understatement to say I had stress in my life! There were nights when sleep seemed impossible. I was so wound up with assignments and papers that I found myself scrubbing walls at midnight.



As I learned more yoga, the frenzied wall scrubbing was replaced with poses like shoulderstand or *viparita karani*. My furrowed brow began to soften and my nerves calmed. An added bonus was my health improved - I rarely got sick.

We now know that the nervous and endocrine (hormone) systems function as one system. There are many poses in yoga that work specifically on the endocrine glands, including the pituitary, adrenals, thyroid and parathyroids. These glands help to control processes associated with the regulation of metabolism and energy supply, responses to stress, extracellular fluid, and, with growth, development and reproduction.

The following poses and their sequence strengthen the endocrine system and improve the body's immune response. You can hold the poses for several minutes each. If time doesn't allow you to complete the entire sequence, you can omit some of the poses, but it is important to follow the order suggested. If you are pregnant, seek the guidance of one of SHC's prenatal instructors for adjusting the poses. Refer to "Yoga the Iyengar Way" or "Light on Yoga" for detailed descriptions of the poses, or click on the links to see definitions from Yoga Journal.

- [Alternate nostril breathing](#) - 5 rounds
- [Downward facing dog](#)
- [Baddhakonasana](#) with bolster
- [Shoulderstand](#)
- [Plow pose](#)
- [Viparita karani](#) - legs up wall
- [Janu sirsasana](#) with head supported by bolster or chair
- Downward facing dog
- [Uttanasana](#) - standing forward bend
- Alternate nostril breathing - 5 rounds
- [Savasana](#) - corpse pose

## Overcoming Nursing Challenges

By Shawna Gamache

I never thought breastfeeding would be so difficult for me. I also never dreamed it could be so rewarding.

My mom nursed my sister and me well into our toddlerhoods effortlessly and I always thought I would do the same. One big reason I wanted a natural birth was so my baby and I could get



off to a good nursing start.

I read all the books, got all the gear, and braced myself for sore nipples and some awkward first weeks followed by years of blissful connection.

I did NOT prepare myself for latches that could take hours with both me and the baby sobbing and hysterical, did not prepare for a tiny, angry little 6-pound-baby facing engorged J-cup breasts full of milk that came in just hours and not days after she was born. I did not prepare myself for blood dripping down my tummy while my hours-old baby lunged at me, her lips smacking in a way that was nothing like any breastfeeding video we watched in childbirth class.

When the lactation consultant came to our house 26 hours after Quinn was born, she did the best and worst thing she could have done: Told me my anatomy (BIG breasts and flat little Hershey kiss-sized nipples) and the crazy cockeyed suck my baby had developed in utero meant that breastfeeding was just not going to happen for us without help. Not yet, anyway.

She gave me a [nipple shield](#), a thin piece of silicone that cups over your nipple and helps baby to latch correctly. I was devastated. All of the books I read had emphasized the importance of the first few days, the danger of letting anything come between baby and the nipple.

But I was also grateful for a way to finally feed the tiny baby who still hadn't slept and had barely eaten.

Still, I was obsessed with getting free of the shield. Every other feeding, I would try to remove it, and the struggle would resume right where it left off.

In the few hours a day that my baby slept, I obsessively surfed the net or paged through my nursing books, looking for a comforting word or two on the nipple shield. Instead, everywhere I looked was scolding and admonition: Don't use it in the first few days and don't use it for long or else baby will get nipple confusion and mama's supply will dry up. My midwife suggested I should just go cold turkey. A friend told me using the shield could impair my daughter's language development.

I was panicked, and as the days using the shield rolled into weeks I was bordering hysterical. I felt like I was racing against time and losing. I was so terrified and sad that I was doing harm to our nursing relationship that I didn't realize that we were actually developing a great nursing relationship.

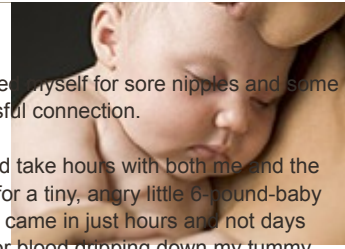
With the nipple shield, Q could latch and would nurse happily, though I sometimes had to use an eyedropper full of expressed milk to get her started. She was gaining weight really well, and always had the right amount of wet and poopy diapers. My supply seemed to be keeping up with her demand, too.

All day long, I was in a constant intellectual panic over the nipple shield, except when we actually nursed, usually tummy to tummy on our sides in bed, my hand on her fuzzy warm head and her big eyes on mine. The passage of time became irrelevant as I listened to her happy, satisfied gulps and felt my own breath growing shallower and calmer along with hers.

Finally, when Q was about eight weeks old, I gave up the fight against the nipple shield and accepted the breastfeeding relationship we had.

Quinn is almost 16 months old now, and she is still nursing and still on the nipple shield. We never had a supply problem and Q was exclusively breastfed the entire time. It's not like we never hit hurdles, but we just kept on rolling. Gulp. Breath. Gulp. Breath. Gulp. Sighhhhhh.

Looking back now, I am just so sad at how much time I lost, at how many of the early hours I spent in a panic or angry at myself. I'm mad that everything I read



was so harsh when it should have been loving. I'm grateful for a dear friend in the medical field who told me very early on that recent studies show that modern nipple shields actually affect supply in fewer than two of every 100 women but that most docs and LCs just don't know that yet.

My greatest sadness is all the times I thought I wasn't REALLY breastfeeding. I saw that tiny piece of silicone as a chasm separating me and my baby when really she never noticed it at all. I wasted so much energy!

Breastfeeding was the source of the most frustration I have ever experienced, but it has also been the most magical, important thing I've ever done for my baby and for myself.

If nursing is hard for you, please know you are not alone. There are millions of women all over the world trying to make it work, questioning if they should even bother. As someone who fought hard to keep nursing through lots of pain and misery, let me tell you that it was SO worth it! If you're beating yourself up that you're not able to give your child the exact breastfeeding relationship you pictured, please stop. That baby is grateful for the nutrition, the comfort, the connection. She doesn't see anything else.

*[Gamache](#) is co-founder of [Moms Alive](#), a blog and website that aims to inspire and inform new Seattle-area mamas. She is also editor of *The Sadhaka*. This article originally ran as a post on [Moms Alive](#).*

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