6 Ways to Practice Spiritual Wellness While Fighting Cancer

Spiritual self-care offers many benefits to people with cancer. Even if you’re not religious, spiritual practices can give you a sense of peace and purpose, which can be invaluable when you’re navigating a frightening diagnosis. According to the National Cancer Institute, studies show that spiritual practices may decrease negative emotions, lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of substance abuse, and increase positive feelings for cancer patients. Here are some tips from Restorative Acupuncture to help you build spiritual wellness into your cancer self-care plan.

1. Create a Holistic Treatment Plan

Spiritual self-care is just one element of holistic cancer treatment. Holistic cancer care goes beyond the therapies recommended to fight the cancer itself, like chemotherapy and
surgery. Because cancer also affects your emotional, mental, and spiritual health, The Well Co. notes that it’s important to focus on your mind and spirit in addition to your body.

Be aware of what you’re putting into your body, too. The anti-inflammatory diet could be helpful at reducing pain and it relies predominantly on whole fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Keep healthy foods in your kitchen to reduce the urge to snack on processed foods that can make pain worse and fill you up on empty calories. Let your diet support your healing, not work against it.

It’s important to note that this does not replace or diminish the need for conventional medicine. Traditional medical treatments are proven to effectively fight cancer. If, however, your cancer isn’t responding to recommended treatments, participating in a clinical trial might be helpful. Clinical trials are designed to determine the safety of new treatments before introducing them as treatment options. You can search online for clinical trials based on your particular diagnosis. For example, if you have chronic lymphocytic leukemia, look for trials aimed at bone marrow transplants, stem cell transplants, and biological treatments.

2. Build a Yoga Practice

Yoga is a great introduction to spiritual self-care. Your yoga practice can be as spiritual or secular as you want! Many people incorporate elements of meditation and mindfulness into their yoga practice, generating greater awareness of self and one’s body. Practicing yoga is an opportunity to look inwards and notice how your body feels throughout different movements. This can train your mind to focus on what’s happening in the present moment instead of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

3. Try Acupuncture Treatments

Acupuncture can be a helpful complementary therapy for people undergoing cancer treatment. It involves the insertion of thin needles into specific points on the body to stimulate energy flow and help alleviate symptoms such as pain, fatigue, and nausea. Acupuncture is believed to help bring balance to the body and can also help reduce stress and anxiety.

While it is not a replacement for traditional cancer treatments, acupuncture can be a valuable addition to a patient’s overall care plan, helping improve their quality of life during a challenging time. Let Restorative Acupuncture help you get some relief during your treatments.
4. Pick Up Meditation

According to Verywell Health, many cancer centers have started offering meditation as an alternative cancer treatment due to its many benefits for patients. Practicing meditation may reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, alleviate chronic pain, and improve your energy levels.

To set the stage for meditation at home, it’s important to optimize your living space for a calm and relaxing atmosphere. Remove sources of stress and anxiety like clutter and disorganized spaces, so be intentional about decluttering, cleaning, and even bringing in a little bit of Mother Nature with houseplants and artwork of nature scenes.

The best thing about meditation is that anyone can practice it at any time. It’s free, accessible, and incredibly rewarding!

5. Practice Mindfulness Throughout the Day

Your spiritual practice doesn’t have to stop with regular yoga or meditation sessions. Try to apply what you learn in these sessions to your daily life. Get in the habit of practicing mindfulness as you go about your day, whether you’re traveling to a doctor’s appointment, doing chores, or eating dinner.

Remember to check in with your body from time to time. Notice where you're feeling tension or pain and try to accept it instead of struggling against it. Research shows that mindfulness can change the way our brains perceive pain so that it’s more bearable.

6. Spend Time in Nature

Being outdoors has great benefits for our mental and physical wellbeing, so try to spend some time outside every day. If you live in a neighborhood that is walkable, take advantage and walk around the block or neighboring parks each day. If you’d like to take your time with nature to the next level, consider forest bathing too.

Forest bathing is an excellent practice in mindfulness. Simply walking in a forest can prompt your nervous system to calm down, relieving stress and the uncomfortable symptoms associated with it. Because stress hormones can compromise your immune system, create tension, and zap your energy, anything you can do to relieve stress will support your cancer treatment.
To get started with this spiritual practice, Healing Forest suggests finding a safe natural space where you can walk slowly and in silence. Focus on the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings of the forest around you as you practice controlling the direction of your attention. Most importantly, leave your expectations behind. Observe what’s going on around you and how it makes you feel instead of trying to force anything. You’ll feel calm, content, and invigorated when you’re finished!

**Care for Your Whole Self**

Cancer treatment is rough. Practicing self-care can help you better cope with the symptoms of your disease and the side effects of your treatment, so you can maintain a high quality of life during your illness. Try integrating elements of spirituality into your self-care regimen to get the most out of your practice. You’re bound to notice a difference!