

DAVID CHANG

ASIAN BURRITO

SIX MEN DOWN

WHAT WENT WRONG ON FIREFIGHTERS' BLACK SUNDAY

FROM BAGHDAD

TO THE BURBS

GLOBAL WARMING PROBLEM

NEW YORK

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE

JANUARY 22-29, 2007



Inner Peace

Learning to breathe in a breathless town.

Believe.
 Outsmart your bad habits.
 Detox your house.
 Forgive a cabdriver.
 Shut up now and then.
 Drink Barolo.
 Pick up a screwdriver.
 Do some good.
 Cheat death.
 Contort. Lengthen.
 Exhale.
 Take advice from felons.
 Make a mess.
 Stop.



PRECISION-TUNE YOUR HYPOCHONDRIA

Will it make you feel better to find what's really wrong?

By SARAH BERNARD

HYPOCHONDRIA is the truest enemy of inner peace—I know that because I suffer from it. A severe to moderate case, I'd say. Lately, I'm less worried about disease and imminent death than premature bodily breakdown. At the age of 34, I can feel my eyes and knees giving out and suspect everything from ulcers to ... worse. So when a friend, a fellow hypochondriac, told me about a longevity specialist who conducts Mayo Clinic-like testing of one's health, I wondered if this person could save me from myself.

Dr. Eric Braverman's practice, called **PATH** Medical (Place for Achieving Total Health), is, in fact, a hypochondriac's candy store. He does full-body ultrasounds to measure the size and shape and surface of every organ, and uses something called a **BEAM** machine to assess the speed of your brain: You get a cap studded with electrodes put on your head and more electrodes clipped to your ears. That produces readings that are used to extrapolate your likelihood of obesity, depression, irregular sleep cycles, and seizures. There's also a video game that you play while the effectiveness of

your neurotransmitters is measured.

If all this sounds like something out of *Young Frankenstein*, it actually looks nothing like that. Braverman, an affable, gray-haired 49-year-old, doesn't even wear a lab coat over his suit. At his office on Park Avenue South, we met in a room dubbed the "Lincoln Suite," which looked like a hotel. When it came time for my ultrasound, I stood to leave, only to be told we were already in the exam room. As I lay on the examination table, I craned my neck to see what popped up on the black-and-white screen. All I could think about was, *Hey, why doesn't everyone get this done?* And then I thought, *Wait a minute, what is that? And that?!*

After conducting a midsection ultrasound and a bone scan, Braverman had bad news for me. I have stage-one osteoporosis, a condition I had yet to worry about. Apparently, I have the bones of a 60-year-old, as well as a high percentage of body fat, mostly in my arms and legs, which I can't blame on my 8-month-old twins for much longer. Not all that serious, I thought. But then Braverman started on about how excess weight can lead to diabetes, which can lead to blindness and circulatory issues, not to mention stress and increased cortisol levels, which have been linked to a weakened immune system and cancer. His recommended treatment includes supplements, and bioidentical hormones, including human growth hormone, which the American Medical Association has yet to endorse for use.

Finding out all this did not, at first, fill me with any inner peace. But it has helped harden my resolve to hit the gym. My hypochondria has not gone away, but at least now I can connect my free-floating fears to genuine causes of concern. As Braverman says, "We can't cure a hypochondriac, but we can make a hypochondriac more productive."

RUN THE NEW AGE GAUNTLET

A newbie test-drives the latest treatments.

By YAEL KOHEN

AL SCHOMBS, a 28-year-old investment associate at Merrill Lynch, commutes from Long Island, works twelve-hour days, and is so habitually stressed he hardly knows what normal feels like. We put him through five treatments and had him rank them from least effective to most:

VIBRATIONAL HEALING WITH JODI SEROTA "When I get in there, she went on for 45 minutes telling me what she's going to do. Finally, she gets to it—says a prayer and does five minutes of weird noises. Then she started to make a noise with her crystal bowl, like running your finger on the rim of a wine glass. Then she had me open my eyes and started asking me about my childhood and I'm like, 'Oh, my God, shoot me now.'"

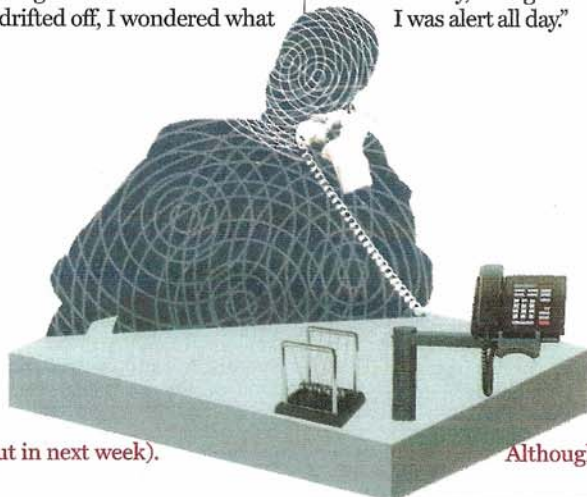
HYPNOSIS WITH ERIC ZEISLER "He had me lie down and close my eyes and concentrate on his voice. He was like, 'Think of a wonderful, peaceful place where you are in control.' I tried to keep from laughing. But when I started to concentrate, sure enough I was in la-la land. As I drifted off, I wondered what

was stressing me out. Was it the phone? The people I work with? But did I feel less stressed after? Honestly, no.

REIKI AT EQUINOX SPA "I thought this was a form of massage, but there is literally no effort put into relieving the tension in the muscles. It's basically just a firm press of the hand—against your chest, your abdomen, your back and shoulders, and so on. It's kind of spiritual. You really have to focus. I, for one, find the more modern techniques of massage far more beneficial.

BASIC YOGA AT OM YOGA "My first time at yoga. I found the meditation relaxing, but the position took so much effort, I was sweating my ass off. There's this one where you put down a big pillow—I don't know what they call it—you have one of your legs straight out in the back, while you're sort of kneeling on this pillow with your other leg crossed, and your arm straight up in the air. I thought my hips were going to dislocate. But after, I did feel refreshed.

ACUMASSAGE AT EXHALE SPA "A nice, soothing atmosphere, with candles. They gave me a cup of tea. The acupuncturist focused on the digestive system. She placed needles in my forehead, between my pinkie and index fingers, on my lower abdomen and two in each foot. Then she used vibrational therapy with tuning forks, placing them against my feet and along my body. Then she massaged my feet, shoulders, and lower back. Next day, I felt great. I was alert all day."



Sunday lunch with a bottle of wine. ... Hopefully breast implants (being put in next week).

Although, this is

more my husband's definition of inner peace. ... I watch soccer on TV, preferably teams I don't care about too much. That way I don't get too worked up about what happens while still getting