

WELLNESS

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Water Up, Fire Down

Countering the stress of the meeting and event industry starts with your own mind-body connection.

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Wellness



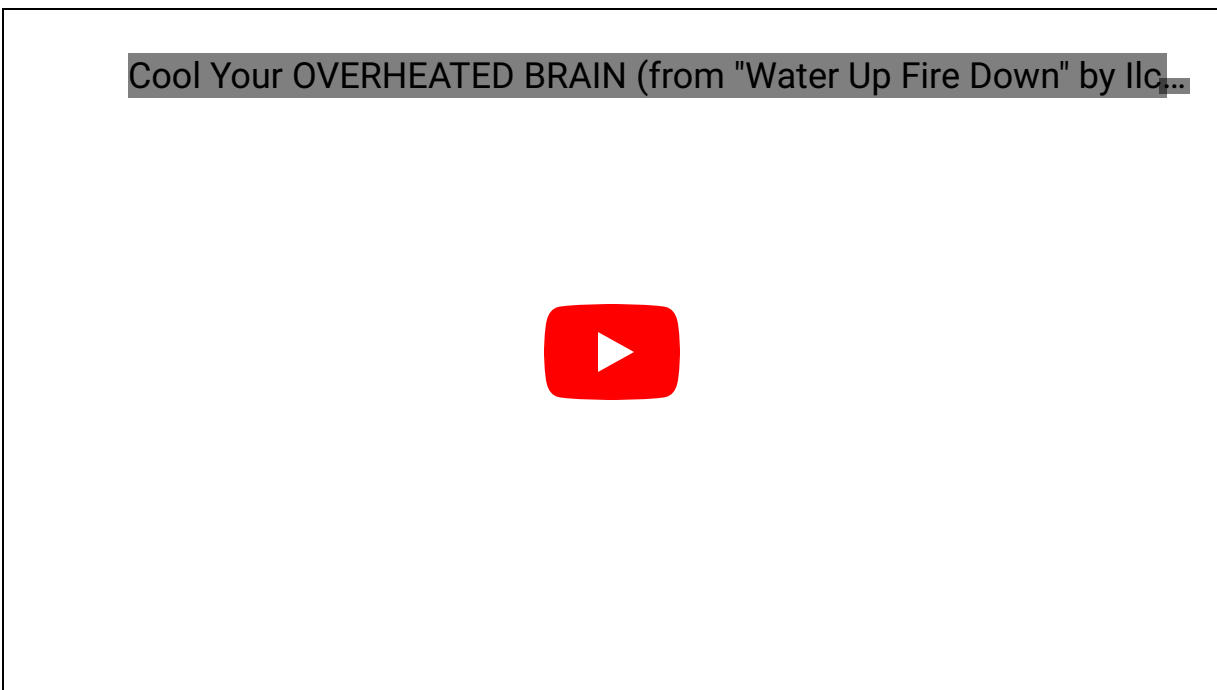
DAMI KIM

Large conferences and trade shows can be exhausting, and they can challenge the resolve of even the most ardent wellness expert.

Body & Brain (info.bodynbrain.com/wellness) wellness, a company specializing in

Eastern holistic energy healing and mind-body practices, was founded in 1996 and now offers 80 U.S. locations (plus many locations around the world). I recently spoke with Dami Kim, former CEO of the company who teaches classes in Las Vegas, at a large trade show and felt a bit better about my poor wellness practices on the road.

"I'm usually an energetic person, but last night I went to bed at 10 o'clock, and this morning I woke up at 8 o'clock," she told me. "I go to conferences, and I feel so tired. There's no place to sit and no place to gather my thoughts; it's loud and there are so many people."



It's important to Kim that people take better care of themselves on the road and at meetings and events. This is also important to Caesars Entertainment, which recently debuted its Wellness Menu for meeting planners, which includes classes with Kim.

"I have been attending classes with Kim for the last two years and I've seen a tremendous change in how I feel," said Reina Herschdorfer, director of marketing, national meetings and events for Caesars Entertainment. "And I've seen how it's impacted other people who are participating in the class. So, when we decided to launch our Wellness Menu, it just seemed like a natural fit to include Dami. She's now listed as one of the speakers on our Wellness Menu, and some of the classes that are on our Wellness Menu are inspired by Body & Brain." (Read much more

that are on our wellness menu are inspired by Body & Brain. (read much more about the Wellness Menu on Page 48.)

Kim, who has traveled the world promoting gut health (including working with Nike executives in Indonesia and a U.S. biotechnology company in Switzerland, among others), believes the essence of the teaching is traditional Korean body-mind connection training that dates back 5,000 years.

"My company basically teaches body-mind connection with stretching," she said. "But our stretching is different from traditional yoga. Typically, you're holding postures for a long time, and this can be challenging for many people. But what we are practicing anybody can do, from 9 year olds to 80 year olds. You use your own level of flexibility and balance because we are opening the body-mind connection by opening your personal energy channel."





Dami Kim leads a wellness exercise for Caesars Entertainment in Las Vegas before the start of IMEX America 2023. JANICE CARDINALE

The mind-body process

We have 360 energy points in our body as well as 12 meridians, Kim explained. Our energy is connected by these meridians, which are essentially energy pathways. You feel better when needles are applied to these.

"But you don't always have access to acupuncture. What if you could open up your own acupressure points by exercising?" she said.

A key part of the training involves relaxation and breathing, but not "forced breaths," Kim said.

"We encourage taking natural breaths like how babies breathe," she said. "When babies are born, they're breathing very naturally from the belly without trying. But as we get older, we experience more stress and our breathing gets shallower and shallower. The more you open your channels, the more you will feel your body, and eventually you can breathe from your lower abdomen, which is natural. At that point you can go into deeper relaxation."

The breathing exercises must be followed by "postures of accumulated energy" because even when your body and mind are connected, it usually doesn't last.

"We need an anchor," Kim said. "The battery charger is your second chakra, so we open that battery charger through breathing postures."

Once your body and mind are connected and strongly anchored, it's time to meditate, which now becomes much easier.

A simple solution

So, what if you need to relieve stress on the road but don't have time for a class?

Kim said there's a simple solution you can practice on your own.

"When you're stressed, what happens? You have fire up, water down," she said.

"We have two kinds of energy: fire energy in our heart, water energy in our kidneys. Fire energy is needed to make your abdomen hot. You need a warm belly to support your lower back, and your kidney water needs to evaporate and go up your spine to cool your head down. Cool head, warm belly is the perfect condition for body balance. And you'll have a clear head and be grounded."

Put simply: When you're stressed, it's fire up, water down, and your mind becomes unbalanced.

"The best thing you can do at any time is to reduce the heat from your head," Kim said. "So, tap your brain, tap the top of your head—tap your acupuncture points and breathe. And then feel the energy between your hands. And you will feel calm and can focus on today. All it takes is just five minutes."

A timely partnership

Herschdorfer believes more companies are embracing wellness and will incorporate Caesars Entertainment's Wellness Menu in their programming.

"Wellness is such an important topic and a subject everyone is talking about," she said. "And I'm hoping that with our menu we're making it easier for planners."

Kim hopes this will help more people learn about health and wellness in an easily accessible way.

"It shouldn't be difficult," she said. "People have so many challenges. They go to therapists, they go to doctors, they spend so much time and money on their own wellbeing. But practicing is easy. Everyone can do it and improve."

Although wellness initiatives are very much up to the individual, Kim has a much larger goal in mind.

"People are connected and are connected to the earth. We need to restore the earth," she said. "But if you don't love yourself, how can you love nature? How can you be more consciousness, love others and the earth? We cannot think clearly if

we're so busy dealing with day-to-day pressures and stressed out. But once you're relaxed, you have more mental space to think. So, my goal is to reclaim our humanity and reclaim our love for earth."



WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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Manual code: **ignite24#3**

Scan-In: On the Challenge app's main dashboard, press the Bonus Activities selector and tap the 'Scan-In' button. Align the app viewer with the QR Code. The code will automatically be detected and provide you with a confirmation notice. Alternatively, enter the manual code in at the bottom of the scan-in screen

Bonus Points: Scan-in during the Challenge and add 1,000 bonus points to your challenge total (limit of one bonus).

To find out more information on the Ignite Wellness Challenge, go to hekahealth.com/ignite24