



Treating the Whole Person with Integrative Medicine



Contributor: [Donald B. Levy, MD](#)

Donald B. Levy, MD, is Medical Director of the Osher Clinical Center for Integrative Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH).

Many people visit the [Osher Center for Integrative Medicine](#) feeling the effects of stress in their bodies – a tight neck, tense jaw, stiff back, headaches, or sleep problems. They might have tried traditional medical treatments without relief and may be seeking another approach.

Most people know why their bodies are tense, or their minds are stuck in overdrive, says [Donald B. Levy, MD](#), medical director of the Osher Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH), which is why he always asks his patients, "What do *you* think is going on?"

The question usually opens a dialogue about deeper issues. Patients may confess struggles at home or work, a major life change, such as a relocation or breakup, the loss of a loved one, even physical or [emotional trauma](#). It's not uncommon for emotional distress to convert to physical pain.

"Integrative medicine is a philosophy of healing that focuses on non-invasive therapies and lifestyle habits to enhance the body's ability to heal. At the Osher Center, we treat the whole person by offering an integrative treatment model that enhances primary medical care through a variety of healing treatments," says Dr. Levy.

Most treatment plans start by examining a patient's lifestyle, including diet, exercise, sleep, stress reduction, and the daily habits around which people conduct their lives.

"It depends on the condition, but the therapies we often start with include [acupuncture](#), [chiropractic care](#), or [therapeutic massage](#). These therapies lend themselves well to chronic conditions, which need to be managed and usually require multiple approaches to healing," says Dr. Levy.

When incorporated as part of an integrative approach to treatment, the following additional treatments also offer significant benefits for many medical conditions.

- [Tai chi](#)
- [Yoga](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Progressive muscle relaxation](#)
- [Mindfulness-based stress reduction](#) (MBSR)

"The future of medicine needs to evolve beyond a mechanical philosophy that relies on replacing broken 'parts.' In my opinion, integrative medicine is a back-to-basics, down-to-earth approach to healing that emphasizes self-care, education and prevention," says Dr. Levy.

- Dustin G.



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In this video, Donald B. Levy, MD, medical director of the Osher Clinical Center for Integrative Medicine, discusses how non-invasive therapies and lifestyle habits can enhance the body's natural ability to heal.

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