



FINE-TUNING YOUR LIFE

By Maureen Sullivan

Over the last five years, I have made dramatic changes to achieve a healthier lifestyle, and I take great pride in this accomplishment. So when Scripps invited me to attend its Executive Health program, I was up for the challenge.

Focused on prevention and detection, the program is based on a whole-person examination, ensuring nothing is overlooked. It is geared for those, like me, who want the best life has to offer. Of course, a healthy mind, body and soul are key—and participating in this program is an important step in that direction.

From the moment I arrived and throughout the entire process at the Scripps Center for Executive Health, I was impressed with every person and procedure. Needless to say, I had high expectations. A busy executive and a single mom, I keep a strict schedule, with hardly the room for this 6:45 a.m.–3:30 p.m. program.

After completing lifestyle and medical-history questionnaires, I began with the treadmill stress

test—considered the most effective screening for heart disease—which monitors heart rate, breathing, blood pressure and fatigue level. Even runners like me can learn a lot from it. I was pleased to learn I ranked above average in the fitness category, and if I had pushed myself 14 more seconds, I would have been deemed in excellent shape! Darn—next time for sure!

Next, for my physical exam, I met with Dr. Susan Starr, lead physician in internal medicine. She was not only engaging but also answered all my health questions. Then it was off to specialists in a variety of fields.

The involvement of such respected medical experts is a highlight of Scripps' program. In just one day, you are examined by physician specialists in gastroenterology, dermatology, radiology and, if needed, cardiology. Every one of them is sincerely interested in helping improve your health, and they encourage their patients to ask questions. And they are prompt. Dr. Starr told me she would call

at 7 a.m. the next day to review my results and, sure enough, my phone rang at 6:59 a.m.

The program concludes with specialists who help you create a lifestyle- and performance-enhancement plan. Although all aspects of the day were notable, for my specific wellness changes I especially benefited from nutrition counseling by Katie Clark, a registered dietician, and from the stress-relief sessions with Dr. Nicole Friedman and Dr. Karen Hall. All three gave me terrific, easy-to-implement suggestions to enhance my life.

Did I mention my busy schedule? Well, this program was worth every minute. Best of all, I walked away with actionable suggestions. In my case, I'm putting more effort into simplifying daily life, further improving my nutrition and

Organic Farm, a family-owned farm serving San Diego for almost 21 years (seabreezed.com). Having this delivery will save time and really force me to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Next, I'm following the docs' advice to set more time aside for three important things: me, me and me. Even with my schedule, I should dedicate five to 10 minutes a day to deep breathing and clearing the mind and body of stress. Part of my enhancement plan is to also make lists of the personal tasks I need to do so they are not constantly on my mind. Now, aren't those two sensible steps for us all?

I can't say enough about the heightened self-awareness gained from the program. After just one day of learning from the experts at Scripps, I am now fine-tuning my lifestyle—adjusting habits that could have adverse effects down the road, beginning new practices to benefit me inside and out, and always being receptive to any signals from my body and mind. After all, a long, healthy, happy life is worth much more than the \$2,500 fee for the program.

I challenge you to take one day out of your busy schedule to reap lasting, lifetime benefits. For more information, go to scripps.org/executivehealth.

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finding ways to relieve stress. Luckily, these initiatives can be combined. I got to work right away by ordering a weekly delivery of organic vegetables and fruits from Seabreeze