

*50+Living our best lives now and in the future!*

## Body, Mind, & Spirit: A Lifelong Journey

**C**arol Tuckey has enjoyed becoming an accomplished athlete, serving as an athletic trainer, teaching while living in Japan, and leading yoga classes. She is also a master gardener. Shaped by her life experiences, observations, and open mind, her perspectives on living her best life are both inspiring and insightful.



### From the Louisiana Swamplands to California

Every journey has a beginning. Carol's journey began near the bayous and swamplands in Louisiana; she was "called the swamp baby" until she was four. Her father and older brothers "haunted the swamplands foraging for food and excitement. It was a Tom Sawyer way of life for the boys and me."

Because of her father's work setting dynamite for an oil company, Carol's family moved relatively often. From the swamplands, her family moved to New Orleans and then to various locations in California. "All this moving" helped "make me a more flexible person."

As a young girl, Carol loved to climb trees and roller skate down long blocks in one of the California neighborhoods where they had lived.



"There were mostly boys in the neighborhood, so I was racing them endlessly and getting shoved around, but I had to take it to have playmates. I was a tomboy." Carol also learned she was a fast runner when "a man in a fancy car" tried to kidnap her one day while walking home from school.

### Discovering the Joy of Volleyball and More

In junior high school, Carol discovered volleyball. Then, a P.E. teacher encouraged her to play with some of the teachers during lunch breaks. It wasn't long before she began participating in weekend tournaments.

Once she started high school, her older brothers would take her to Sorrento Beach in Santa Monica, where she learned how to play beach volleyball from some of the older guys. After college, she participated in two-person beach tournaments and was in the finals for a "money tournament," where she and her partner placed second.

While playing on teams, Carol recognized that it was vital for her “to be prepared both physically and mentally;” this meant “early to bed and early to rise—in other words, no partying or you wouldn’t survive the first day of the tournament. And if volleyball wasn’t enough activity, I was coaxed into joining a women’s soccer team” Later, after she married and started raising a family, she became her children’s soccer coach.

### **A Growth Mindset and Lifelong Learning**

After her children were grown and she was single again, Tuckey returned to college to finish a degree in psychology. “Now I was enjoying learning.” During this period, she also started reading books by Krishna Murti, Ram Das, and Lao Tzu, among others; as a result, “a whole new world opened. I became more contemplative about our earth and its many people. I was on fire to know there were so many beautiful ways to look at everything without judgment. I began taking yoga and stretch classes to open my mind and stretch my body.”



### **A New Life and New Learning Opportunities**

While finishing her degree, Carol met her soulmate, Al Tuckey. He was also completing a degree and serving in the military. When the military transferred him to Okinawa, he and Carol got married.

Living in Japan, Carol participated in volleyball tournaments and became a substitute teacher. She gained first-hand experience “trying to manage classrooms full of wild military kids who loved to fight. Being an athletic trainer was a more calming experience because she had “access to pools, gyms, and the sand.”

After three years, the Tuckeys were sent to Virginia, where Carol began volunteering to work at educational events featuring well-known speakers

and authors. “I was introduced to many new concepts that began to change my life,” such as “the vibration of peace is greater than that of love.” While living in Virginia, Carol became part of a city tennis team.

Tired of the harsh winters in Virginia, the Tuckeys moved to Florida, where they enjoyed participating in drumming circles “every Sunday night at our local beach near the volleyball courts. How convenient.”

Hurricanes and other weather issues prompted the Tuckeys to move again—this time to Oregon. Once in Oregon, Carol enrolled in an eight-month yoga teaching course called Ananda or Bliss Yoga. “This was my wake-up call to mindfulness and nonattachment, which I still find very useful.” Soon, she was teaching yoga classes through the YMCA.

Because she engaged in years of intense physical activities, Carol eventually needed a knee replacement. “With so much downtime, I took a five-month course to become a Master Gardner.” Currently, the Tuckeys live in Southern Oregon and have created beautiful gardens around their home.

### **For Relaxation**



Carol and her husband like to take walks and ride their bikes, and they also practice yoga and stretch each day. They both enjoy gardening and growing a lot of their own food and still enjoy drumming together.

### **Advice for Others**

“Consume reasonable calories, exercise 30 minutes daily, be grateful and polite, and live in the moment. Live within your means, pay bills on time, and nurture family and friends. Having hobbies and enjoyable pastimes are gifts to be relished. Stay amazed as a mindful observer of life unfolding.”

## Master Gardening

According to the [Gardening Knowhow](#) site, “A master gardener is a citizen that is interested in gardening and can fulfill the training and volunteer hours necessary. Requirements vary by county and state, and the course is tailored for that specific region... The first step to becoming a master gardener is to fill out an application. You can get this online at your County Extension offices website.”

## Be Good to Yourself with Routine Stretching in the New Year



decreased their likelihood of falls.

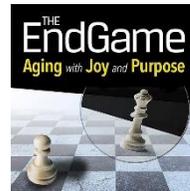
As suggested in a [2016 study](#) published in the *International Journal of Health Sciences*, older adults who regularly engaged in stretching improved their balance and

From the Winchester Hospital Health Library, a [report](#) from the American College of Sports Medicine notes that our muscles, tendons, and ligaments get shorter as we age. However, we can increase flexibility by “incorporating stretching into our daily routine.” Some of the benefits listed in this report include better circulation, improved posture, and better physical performance.

A [report](#) from Colorado State University’s Columbine Health Systems Center for Healthy Aging indicates that regular stretching may also help us reduce stress. “Stress can cause muscles to become tense, which in turn causes muscles to tighten, leading to discomfort and chronic pain. Stretching reduces muscle tension, thereby reversing the cycle of tension and chronic pain.” This same report also claimed that stretching “has been shown to increase serotonin levels” that help stabilize our mood and reduce stress.

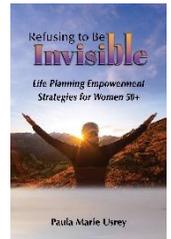
After talking with Carol Tuckey and reading benefits of stretching, I plan to engage in routine stretching as we enter a new year. **How about you?**

## Podcaster Hosts Author of Book on Empowerment Strategies for Women 50+



Featured in our November 2022 [newsletter](#), Don Akchin’s post-career mission is to “write and speak about aging with joy, purpose, and grace.” He publishes a weekly newsletter, [The EndGame](#), and hosts a related podcast.

I appreciate Don’s recent invitation to be a guest on his podcast to talk about my new book, *Refusing to Be Invisible: Life Planning Empowerment Strategies for Women 50+*. To listen to this 21-minute podcast, [click here](#).



## Yoga for Your Health and Wellbeing



[Medical News Today](#) refers to Yoga as “an ancient practice that involves physical poses, concentration, and deep breathing” and notes several different “types of yoga and disciplines within the practice.”

As described in a 2011 article in the *International Journal of Yoga*, “Yoga is a 3,000-year-old tradition that “is now regarded in the Western world as a holistic approach to health and is classified by the National Institutes of Health as a form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine.”

## Health Benefits

Various sources suggest that regularly practicing

yoga has many health benefits. For example, a Healthline [article](#) suggests practicing Yoga “seems to be especially helpful for improving flexibility in adults age 65 and older.”

A John Hopkins Medicine health and wellness [report](#) states that if “you’re going through an illness, recovering from surgery or living with a chronic condition, yoga can become an integral part of your treatment and potentially hasten healing.”



According to [Harvard Health](#), “several small studies have found yoga to have a positive effect on cardiovascular risk factors, “ such as lowering

blood pressure “in people with hypertension and lowering excessive blood sugar levels in people with non-insulin-dependent diabetes.”

Several sources claim that practicing yoga is good for stress relief. A Very Well & Fit [post](#) claims practicing yoga reduces stress and anxiety and can improve sleep.

In an interview for a John Hopkins Medicine [article](#), cardiologist Michael Blaha says that “stress can increase inflammation” in our bodies that can harm our hearts.” Further, Blaha explains that chronic stress can lead to unhealthy lifestyle choices such as not getting enough sleep, eating wrong, not exercising, or making poor food choices –all of which can put our “heart health at risk.”

### Getting Started

You may wish to start by reading about yoga practice for older adults. Checking with your healthcare provider before starting any new exercise program is generally recommended—especially if you have hip or other joint replacements or have a medical condition. YouTube offers various free online sessions such as [15-Minute Energizing Yoga Flow](#). Also, some community colleges and your local YMCA may offer yoga classes.

### Purpose

“Research indicates that having a sense of purpose is associated with better health, including mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Individuals who purposefully share their gifts and talents for the benefit of others tend to have an increased sense of joy and happiness in their lives.”

*From Refusing to Be Invisible: Life Planning Empowerment Strategies for Women 50+.*

### open

*helen laurence*



I open to the sound:  
yurt roof receiving rain  
already I serve myself  
a slice of future ache  
showers traded for a spell:  
dry cold, sunlight maybe  
embracing outside days  
to gather small kindling  
visit frosty broccoli  
but this patter and drip  
winding down the storm  
night showers lingering  
mornings roped in pearls  
this cocoon of escape  
I desire to prolong

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