

Recovering from a surgery makes one appreciate the good health that we usually take for granted. Delna Anand shares several lessons from her recent experience as she continues the healing process.

# What my surgery taught me about healing

I thought I looked after myself fairly well, and yet it took so many reminders (mainly from myself) to go check on an old appendectomy wound. It was sitting quietly for 12 years and all my previous check ups were normal. But a slight hardening over the area where my appendix stitches are, got me back to the clinic. Turned out that I had an incisional hernia in the abdomen and needed urgent surgery.

I went for surgery, waiting to revert back into routine in a few days time. A procedure that usually takes 30-40 minutes, took almost 4 hours in my case due to complications, and that was when I knew that recovery would be longer than I had hoped. With a mesh stitched across my abdominal wall and an unbearable pain to manage, I was sent home with no other choice but to slow down.

It isn't easy recovering from any kind of surgery. It was challenging, physically and emotionally, but I learnt a few things along the way. »

Easier said than done. Quite honestly, resting and relaxing were way down on my to-do list. While I did make time for regular yoga and meditation, life was still fast paced, juggling the usual work, home and kids' routine. I so wanted to bounce back quickly. It seemed so brave to heal quickly and I know people who wear their swift recoveries like a badge of honour. But it is also a classic post-surgery mistake to jump the gun and end up in pain all over again. A mistake I didn't have the courage to make. A full recovery needs patience. A lot of it.



**"IF YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT, I ONLY WANT THE GOOD STUFF"**

...famously spoken by Remy, the little rat chef from Ratatouille. Funny coming from a rat but eating clean truly opens up a new world.

A week after my surgery, I was given the green signal to slowly start eating regular food. But each time, I nibbled at a pizza or any processed food, my body struggled to digest it and so I decided to stick with good ol' home cooked food.

Eating right isn't about diets and losing weight. There is so much more to food and nutrition than weight loss. During my yoga training, I had learned about 'Mithahara', finding balance. It says that a restricted diet (in terms of quality and quantity) is not able to protect your body, while an excessive diet is just as harmful. It is so necessary to find balance and the inner knowing of what to eat and when to stop eating. Of course, this understanding won't come in an instant. (Remember the old saying - good things come to those who wait!) So what we need to do is really take the time to be with the food we eat and experience each morsel. So many of us rush through meals, eat on the go, or at our desks and then wonder why we feel bloated or unsatisfied. This happens when our system is not in balance. Honestly, the biggest diet guru is our stomach, and it takes courage to really listen to what the body is saying. But worth a try.

**SLEEP YOUR WAY TO RECOVERY**

'Sleep' is such an underrated activity. The body repairs and restores itself when asleep. Your brain triggers the release of hormones that encourage tissue growth, and this can help recover from injuries such as cuts or even tired muscles from a long day at work. Create a nice turndown routine before bedtime, like we do for babies. Dim the lights, speak softly and definitely put away the gadgets and screen time at least half an hour before zzz. A good night's sleep does wonders for a healthy state of mind and an energized and youthful body. It isn't called beauty sleep for nothing.

**NEED FOR SPEED**

When I started getting back to routine, I realised how little tolerance we have for anyone who is slower than or less than us in any way. How briskly we walk past people who may be struggling to take their steps. How hastily we drive from one signal to another till we reach our destination. How fast we run through the day, and then we wonder 'where did the years fly?'. I think it's so much easier for us to rush and be on autopilot than to slow down and be mindful. So I invited myself to slow down and enjoy everything, one task at a time. Like when I sat down with a cup of tea, I didn't text a bunch of people, or read the news. I simply just relished my tea.

**PRIORITISING AND DECLUTTERING**

I'm so grateful for the friends who came over to see me or sent me flowers and good cheer, and I love them dearly for understanding my need to feel uplifted. Their presence and love really saw me through the dark days.

I wonder why I don't meet my favourite people more often. Why don't I connect with them more, as they bring these beautiful joyous moments into my life? So

often we don't even have time to let them in. Instead we let in so much toxicity, in terms of people and situations. They drain us out till we are on 1% battery.

Declutter your life of toxic thoughts, people and situations, and feel a weight lift off your shoulders instantly. Make room for all that sparks joy.



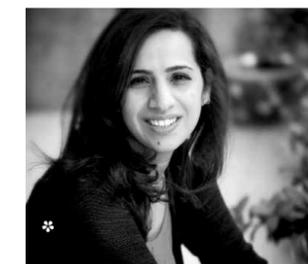
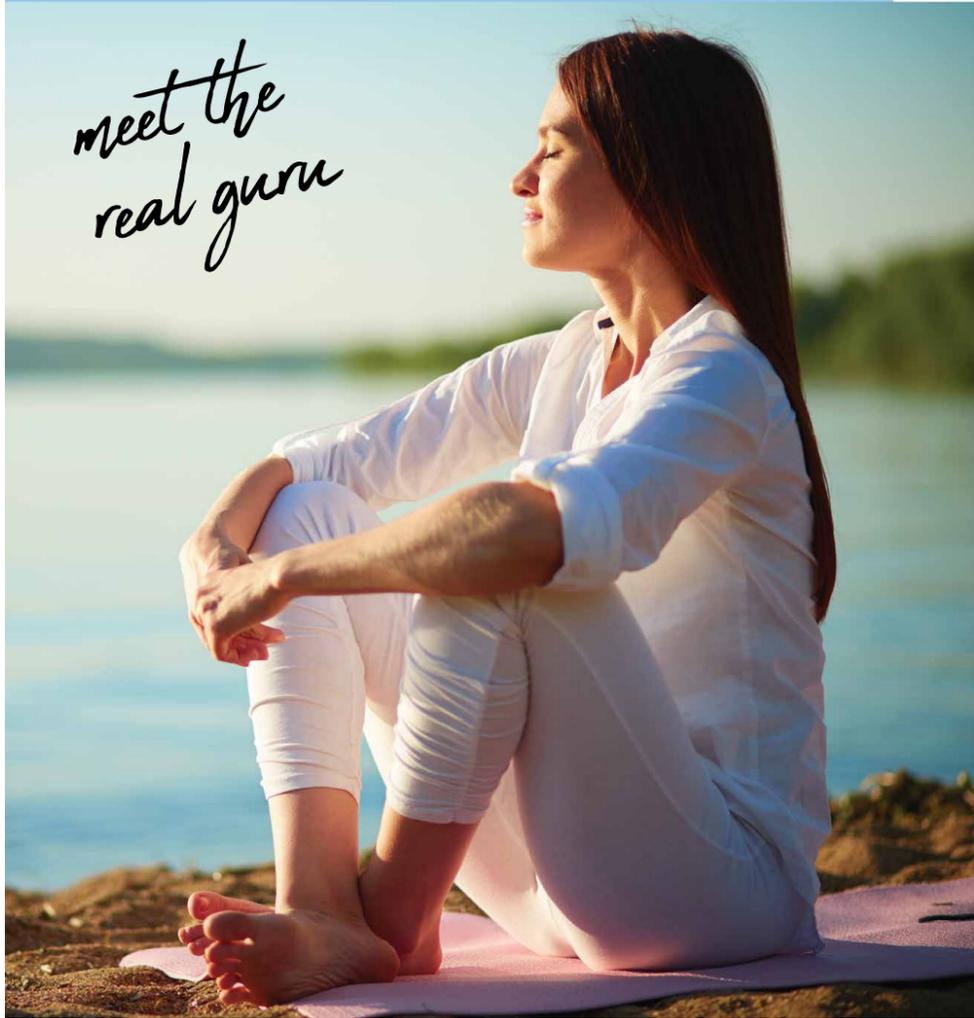
**THE GRASS IS GREEN**

Being in nature boosts your immunity, lifts your spirit, improves your state of mind, and promotes better sleep. If you're fortunate to live near a park or the sea, you're probably making full use of it anyway. If you need to make an effort to get closer to nature, make it. As often as you can. It heals your mind and body faster than anything. And if that's not possible, visualise!

**VISUALISE**

Why live with anything less than the immense power we have. Who can take away the power of our imagination? So if you can't get to a park or beach, just close your eyes and imagine! Remember your last hike in the mountains, or that family vacation at the beach? Go back to it in your thoughts and experience every bit of how you felt. The crackle of dried leaves as you walk, the fresh mountain fragrance, the warmth of the sun seeping through the leaves of the tree, take yourself on that little trip and feel yourself heal – mentally and physically. I spent my free time watching a heap of wonderful feel-good movies, switching off those that didn't have a sweet little vibe. Sometimes the best way to complete a task is to leave it incomplete. I chose to only let in the goodness through every possible avenue, and I really began to enjoy my recovery time. I think I had been waiting for a time like this and the Universe gave it to me somehow. I'm filled with gratitude! (But next time however, I will be a bit more specific with my requests!) ✨

It's so easy to get lost in a world of Instagram yogis and social media's inspiring quotes and stories. So many different philosophies of life, different points of view and varied perspectives – which are all fabulous I'm sure. But sometimes it's hard to see through the spiritual clutter when you're seeking something specific. As always, you look for something and find something else – and most of the time, it's just what you need. I have learnt to love and respect the wonderful spiritual thought leaders of today, but I realised that the best Guru for us is the one that lies within. The answers are all inside, waiting to be accessed. A few moments of silence is all it's going to take. If only we can stop talking, stop judging ourselves and others, stop fretting for a future that may never be ours and stop moping over a past that cannot change. Only when we can silence this nonstop clatter of sounds, are we able to find the wisdom within, the guidance that is ours, if only we're willing to listen.



**DELNA**  
Delna is a certified Hatha Yoga and Dhyana (meditation) teacher specialising in sound healing, a level 3 Reiki and angel-soul therapy practitioner, and also a student of 'A Course in Miracles'. Apart from teaching or writing about on yoga, yoga nidra, pranayama and wellness, she works in the Dubai's fast paced Public Relations industry.