



Chaitriven School of Meditation in Sydney, which is heavily influenced by ancient Eastern philosophies on meditation.

With these ancient principles as a foundation, Keen developed practical exercises that help stressed employees and even students to reduce stress, boost vitality, find inner stillness and strength in situations of stress or pressure and ultimately learn how to be present in themselves, their colleagues and their loved ones.

Adds Keen: "We teach people how cleaning and strengthening their energy, or noticing when their energy has been depleted, can actually prevent burnout."

Soulless executives

For the last three years, Keen has been studying burnout.

"Some studies say up to 10 percent of people in the work force get burnout in a year. Burnout is defined as a loss of enthusiasm, energy and motivation. People experience a collapse in their energy, which is something that's quite new. It's a modern affliction, and so treating it from a holistic perspective makes a big difference," says Keen, who is in the final stages of finishing her book on recovering from chronic fatigue and burnout.

Many companies now recognize the increase in workplace stress and its impact on productivity. In response, the work-life balance movement was born and has been gaining ground. Today, companies are doing such things as subsidizing recreational facilities for their employees, encouraging work-from-home arrangements, introducing stress-management forums and inviting experts on stress management to give workshops and seminars.

"I've interviewed chief executives and managing directors in both Australia and the UK and studied companies inside-out, and I saw a lot of emptiness. People were not in touch with themselves and to me it doesn't have to be this way," shares Keen, who is committed to helping people achieve quality of life in today's modern world. ■

THE Vital Switch techniques are best learned through guided, experiential modules in workshops but Keen shares some tips on how vipers like us can nourish ourselves in the midst of our busy lifestyles:

Before you rush out to the daily rat race. Start by creating a space for yourself, even a small one. Take your first step by giving yourself 15 minutes each day just to be alone. Taking time out for yourself is the first step to letting go.

When you're faced with tons of to-dos at work. Breathe deeply into your body, feel your breath even down in your belly, below the navel. Take extra time to prepare your state of mind and your energy so that when you approach the situation you are able to rest in a sense of inner calm.

When you've been pounding on your computer for hours on end. One technique that can be very refreshing is to wash your hands and with your awareness of the Chi (life force), tune in to the vibration and kind of push out the gunk that's been there. Also, when at work, pay attention to your posture—sit up or stand up straight. You would be surprised how draining it is to constantly slouch over the computer, over a desk or even the car wheel. Sitting up straight allows your energy to flow better. You will also notice when you pay attention to your posture that when your shoulders are held back and your belly slightly forward, it is very hard to feel depressed or heavy in your body.

When you haven't had enough sleep. Nothing replaces adequate eight-hour sleep but a good way to recuperate quickly from lack of sleep is to take 15 minutes to lie down and do a relaxation exercise during the day—maybe when you get home from work or in the afternoon.

When you get home after a busy day at work. Take a few minutes to feel the center of your chest. Just feel, do not think and do not let your mind sink to emotions. Then you can take this space of centering before engaging with your family.

To learn more about Vital Switch or arrange for an individual session or group workshop, visit www.vitalswitch.com

Let the good times



Bowling makes a striking comeback!

You've hit the bars and smashed the court. Now it's time to strike the lanes.

Bowling is rising fast as the sport of choice for the active urbanite. Once a favorite national pastime, fueled by the likes of Paeng Nyunguran, bowling's comeback is marked with an eye for style and a focus on experience. Gone are the days of stark, dimly lit, today's bowling center is a warm, colorful and, ultimately, fun hub to meet, hang out and play with friends and family.

Spokanehead this trend is the 32,000 SM Bowling Center at the Mall of Asia. From the moment you step into the red neon main hall and see festooned the striking colors, LED lights and large wall graphics, you know this is different.

Designed by the Australian architects, EAT, the SM Bowling Center was developed from the ground up focused on the total user experience. As EAT architect Ed Gar-pole is, "It's more than just bowling. It's a place where bowling

lanes are just part of the feature. The spaces are designed so that it can transform into a massive event venue. People need to be pampered, visually and physically."

And gamper it does. With ergonomic designer furniture, 5-star reception, customer service and striking visual design, it would be so easy to just sit back, relax and just hang out with friends. If you're inclined to do just that, this is the place to do it. Grab a meal at the Sunset Boulevard diner or a few drinks from the coffee shop and bar. Find your spots and you're set.

The centerpiece, of course, is the game. Playing in the SM Bowling Center is an experience in itself. Featuring synthetic overlay bowling lanes with wood aprons and Xtreme Glow tracks, you have the option to play a traditional game or strike up the fun factor with glow-in-the-dark "disco" bowling. Comfortable sofa sets, coddle and the Burmott designed visuals

strike you while you wait your turn and the Quicker-MAR Bowling X Automatic Scoring System displaying on massive 42-inch plasma screens keep you updated on how you're doing. Celebrating the mission of tech into the game, touch screen LCD terminals are provided to put you in control of your game.

Those seeking a more intimate gaming experience can play a few games of billiards. In contrast to the bright neon sparkle of the lanes space, the bowling hall provides a more relaxed atmosphere. Even here, the focus is the experience. Tournament quality cue balls and international standard tables work with the lighting, furniture

and design to maintain the elegance of class you deserve.

Beyond these, the SM Bowling Center features the Sunset Boulevard diner, a coffee shop and bar area, a smokers lounge and maintenance lockers.

The SM Bowling Center is located at the ground floor of the SM Mall of Asia Entertainment Building. The center offers packages for bowling lessons, and tournaments, parties, school activities and professional tournaments.

www.smbowling.com
596-1533 to 34



Rest at work

Job burnout has become a global epidemic that companies and their employees have to deal with. Fortunately, professionals have emerged to help deal with this stressful problem
By Sankie G. Simbulan

Traffic Pollution Extra-long work hours Office intruders

These are just some of the sources of stress that corporate warriors have to contend with day in and day out. Stress brings tension, and no matter how elastic and flexible we may be, like a rubber band that's stretched to the limit, sooner or later our body and spirit are going to give.

A United Nations report in the early 1990s labeled job stress as "the 20th century disease," while the World Health Organization says job stress has become a "worldwide epidemic." Workplace stress costs companies and the government a lot of money, with employees calling in sick more often, productivity levels dropping and higher



job-turnover rates. A growing number of young professionals, in fact, have been diagnosed with chronic fatigue and burnout syndrome.

With this scenario, finding rest at work may seem like an oxymoron. But for Samantha Keen, this is not impossible, and she is teaching students and professionals in different parts of the world just how it can be done.

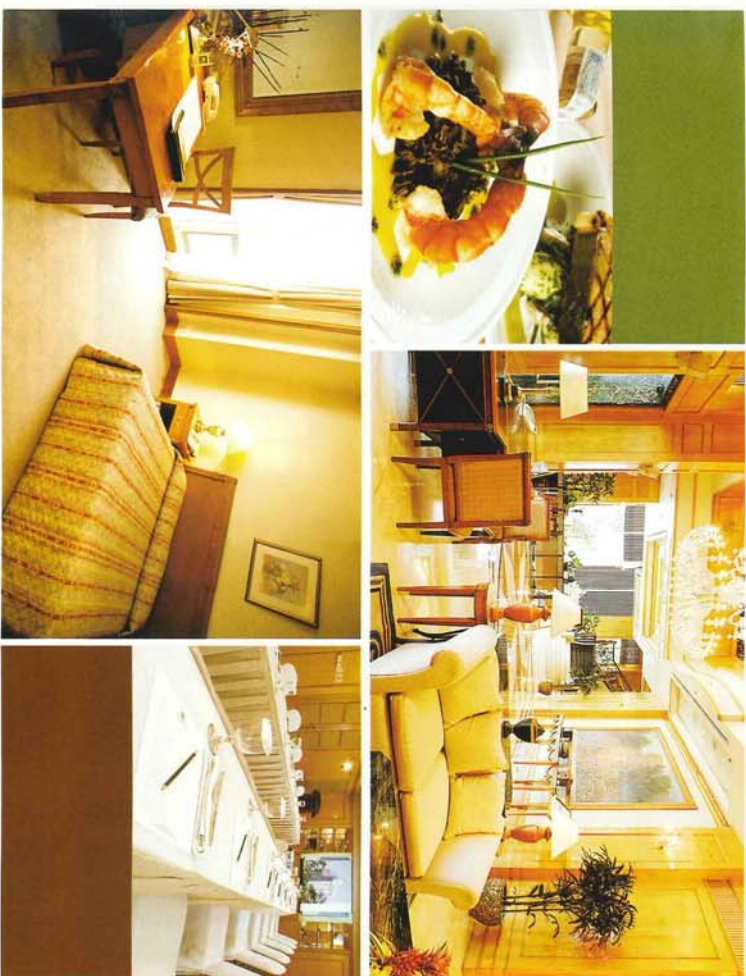
Vital switch

Keen was only in her 20s and working as a financial journalist in the UK when the debilitating symptoms of exhaustion, insomnia and heavy flu that accompany chronic fatigue began to surface. When she saw that she was not getting any better despite frequent trips to the doctor, she decided

that a radical change in her lifestyle was needed if she was to regain control of her life and her health. It was then that she started to get into meditation and found herself on the road to wellness.

Now in her mid-30s, Keen has recovered fully and runs a company called Vital Switch with her partner Stefan Gorkiewicz that helps people in corporate setups use meditation as a way of becoming more focused and alert at work. For the last five years, they have conducted meditation workshops in Europe, Australia, the US, Singapore and the Philippines for companies as well as individuals.

"Vital Switch is about making the right switch for vitality; the change that you can make to become more alive," says Keen, who was trained at the



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