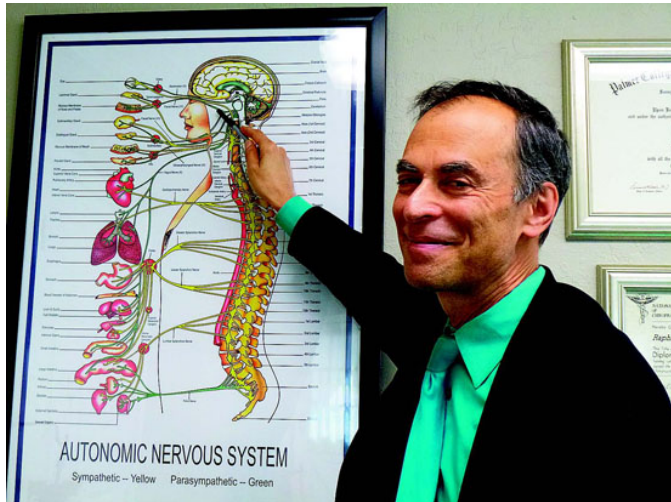


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## New Options for Health

By Sophie Braccini



Raphael Rettner in his Lafayette office.  
Photos Sophie Braccini

Set in a charming cottage on Mt. View Drive across from Trader Joe's in Lafayette, Raphael Rettner has opened a weight loss and wellness center. Dr. Rettner combines his chiropractic training with his studies in nutrition, Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine and yoga. Over his 30 years of practice, he has worked to uncover the underlying causes of individual's excess weight and to address it accordingly.

Rettner envisioned a wellness clinic a few years ago. He had a chiropractic office in Berkeley, but Lafayette's semi-rural atmosphere felt right to him. "I'm committed to treating the underlying causes (of weight gain)," affirms Rettner. "Most people think that in order to lose weight you cut calories, eat less and exercise more. It does not always work like that. You could have an imbalance in your endocrine system, you can have a neurotransmitter deficiency or food allergies. You can

also have energy imbalances, emotional blocks causing you unconsciously to not want to lose weight even if you consciously want to lose it."

Rettner uses different tests and exams to identify whether the issues are hormonal, emotional, linked to food cravings and brain chemistry, allergies or an acidic body. Malcolm Quint was his patient four years ago and lost 35 pounds when he removed dairy, gluten and nightshade vegetables from his diet. "We did extensive testing and I completely changed the way I eat," says the 62-year-old man.

Rettner also consults as a chiropractor for musculoskeletal issues, something of high interest to Moraga resident Amy Smith. A nurse by training, she studied with Palo Alto's Esther Gokhale, who the New York Times calls the 'Posture Guru of Silicon Valley.' Smith is conducting a series of presentations and classes in Lamorinda.

After suffering an accident that required spinal surgery, Smith decided to look for the best way to prevent future problems. "I found information about non-surgical approaches and the Gokhale Method," she says. She took the six-week training course and became so enthusiastic about it that she decided to further her training with Gokhale and become a teacher herself. "Esther has worked extensively on what she calls the primal posture," says Smith. "She's observed the natural posture of children, and of (people in) cultures where back pain virtually does not exist, and designed a method to teach people how to restore it for themselves."

Back pain is ubiquitous. It comes and goes and can degenerate into a serious handicap. When Smith offered a free session at the Moraga Country Club in January, word spread and the large conference room was filled in no time. Smith showed a simple shoulder-roll movement to reposition the shoulders, open the chest and improve neck posture. She had the group practice a different walk, adjusting the hips, legs and feet.

"The method shows how to change your posture and movements in everyday life," says Smith. "It is like learning a foreign language; it is a journey and with practice it becomes second nature." Smith explains that we change our skeleton completely every 10 years, and that by changing the way we impact our joints and bones we can change ourselves. "Bad backs run in my family," she says, "but I can change my predisposition. We are not stuck with how we are."

Smith teaches small group classes in Moraga and Lafayette. Her next free presentation will be

at the Lafayette Physical Therapy office on March 4. For information, contact Smith at amy@gokhalemethod.com or visit [www.gokhalemethod.com/biography/Amy\\_Smith](http://www.gokhalemethod.com/biography/Amy_Smith).

For information about Advanced Weight Loss and Wellness at 959 Mt. View Drive in Lafayette, call (925) 962-9160 or visit [advancedweightlossandwellness.com](http://advancedweightlossandwellness.com).

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Amy Smith teaches people how to walk with better posture at the Moraga Country Club.

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