



21-DAY RESET RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK

Presented by the Marion Institute BioMed Programs

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DAY 1: SUNSHINE AND NATURAL VITAMIN D

Sunshine has played a “star”-ring role in healing the human body for thousands of years. In the quest for health, the sun wields incredible power. Most notably, sunlight boosts the body’s production of Vitamin D, which is thought to regulate at least 1,000 different genes governing virtually every tissue in the body. Adequate sunlight is vital to the improvement of sleep, stress reduction, the maintenance of strong bones, improved immune function, and the production of serotonin to support a calm and focused mood. While sunbathing for seven hours in the strong midday sun isn’t good for the skin, we don’t have to resign ourselves to vampire tendencies either. It’s important to have a healthy relationship with the sun. When you think about it, the sun is as integral to our wellbeing as water and air. So let the sun shine in!

THE PLAN:

Make sure you are exposing yourself *safely* by reading this [article](#) from Dr. Mark Hyman, M.D.

Watch this video, [Making Vitamin D from the Sun by Vitamin D Society](#), for tips on what time of day is best to feel those rays. (1 minute)

THE PRACTICE:

Spend 30 minutes a day of exposing the arms, hands, and face to the sun. Just this short length of time will give you the dose of Vitamin D your body needs. Even on overcast and cloudy days, some exposure is better than no exposure. Of course, this is much easier depending on the time of year, but even in winter, finding a sunny spot inside your home or office will work, too!

DAY 2: HAVE REAL FUN

When was the last time you had fun? Not the scrolling-on-social-media or grabbing-beers-after-work fun, but real, honest *fun*. The type of fun where you lose all track of time, let your guard down, and feel truly connected to those around you. Since the start of the covid pandemic three years ago, the world has seen a sharp rise in depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, and suicide rates due in large part because overwhelming external stressors far outweighed lighthearted moments in our day-to-day lives. But since the waning of the pandemic, we still haven't tipped the scales *back* to joy.

It sounds simple: having fun is good for our health. But how often do we prioritize play? Do we set aside time each day? Or, do we block off a week or two during the year to let loose and have a good time?

Play is a vital aspect of our humanity, as much today as it has been throughout human history. This is true of children, certainly; but it is no less true of adults. Having fun is not only beneficial for our social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development, it is a key ally in stress reduction and overall well-being. When we are deprived of play, we are less able to cope with stress, more likely to grow irritable, less creative, and less productive. The message here is simple: *Play every day.*

THE PLAN:

Do you know your Fun Type? Read this [article by Michael Rucker, Ph. D.](#) to see if you are having the right fun for your personality type.

Check out this great TEDTalk entitled, [Why Having Fun is the Secret to a Healthier Life, featuring author Catherine Price.](#) (13 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

Grab a board game, shoot some pool, dance around the house, watch the outtakes from your favorite shows, fly a kite, jump rope, sit on a swing, submit to a tickle fight, try a cannonball in the pool. Break some rules! *Just Have. Fun.*

DAY 3: CONSCIOUS BREATHING

Every single day we take an average of 20,000 breaths. By the time you reach age 50, you will have cycled through 400 million breaths! The respiratory process is automatically regulated by the body's nervous system, yet there are ways in which you can *influence* the process in order to breathe more efficiently, increase energy, remove toxins, and stimulate a healthier blood flow to the body.

A deep breath requires us to fill our lungs completely, causing our bellies to move out and in. This is belly breathing and it's something we typically 'unlearn' at an early age. When we breathe from the belly we stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, decrease stress and anxiety, enable the lungs to remove toxins at a greater rate, increase the body's energy production, and stimulate a healthier flow of the blood and lymph systems. As you breathe, does your body rise and fall or move out and in?

One technique that encourages abdominal breathing is the 4/4/8 technique: Start by inhaling through your nose for a count of 4, then suspend the inhalation at the top for a count of 4, then exhale for a count of 6 to 8. Do this slowly and at the bottom of your exhalation, gently draw the belly button towards the spine. Repeat the cycle four or more times for the best outcome. With daily practice, this breathing exercise will eventually become like second

THE PLAN:

Read this article: [Breathing Exercises: Three To Try by Andrew Weil, M.D. \(drweil.com\)](https://drweil.com) (5 minutes)

Watch this video on breath mechanics called [How to Breathe with Belisa Vranich](#) featuring a belly-breathing exercise at the end. (10 minutes)

Listen to this [podcast with Dr. Mark Hyman interviewing James Nestor](#), science writer and author of *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art* entitled The Power of Breath as Medicine. (1 hour)

THE PRACTICE:

Spend 5 minutes each day consciously breathing. Out of the 20,000 breaths you'll breathe today, try to make 100 of them conscious. For the long-term, select a breathing exercise that gives you something you need!

DAY 4: DRINKING WATER

The body's most essential nutrient is water. Water plays a vital role in every function of the human body, including maintenance of the body's structures, energy production, temperature regulation, digestion, healing, detoxification, and mental acuity. On average, 55-65% of the adult human body is water; and because the body cannot produce the water it needs, hydration is a requirement for life. In terms of quality of life, it can be said that when we consume adequate amounts of water, we support the body's propensity for wellness.

For most people it is reasonable to follow this formula to calculate the approximate minimum amount of water you need daily to remain hydrated: body weight (pounds) \div 2 = water (ounces). While this number may need to be adjusted to reflect your unique body's needs and habits, set this number as a goal and evaluate the effects of hydration on the body. If no other lifestyle change was done except increasing the amount of water you drink every day, that alone would dramatically move the body toward health.

THE PLAN:

This [article](#) that asks the question, are you drinking enough water to be healthy? (CNN.com) (5 minutes)

Watch this video called, "[What would happen if you didn't drink water?](#)" with Mia Nacamulli on YouTube. (5 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

Calculate the approximate minimum amount of water you need to remain hydrated. Elevate this number to be front-of-mind and make a plan for how and when you'll hydrate. Tip: add a slice of lemon or cucumber to freshen things up!



DAY 5: FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

Have you ever made a promise to yourself to exercise more only to fall out of habit after a short time? We all know how good exercise is for our lungs, heart, bones, waistline, mood, and energy levels. It's our negative *concept* of the word "exercise" itself that can be our biggest hinderance.

Functional fitness, or functional movement, simply means moving your body in ways that make everyday activities safer and easier; things like carrying the groceries, picking up small children, walking on natural landscapes, climbing steps, or lifting your roller bag into the overhead compartment.

The benefits of functional exercise are vast. And the best way to achieve health with movement is to elevate your heart rate, which will increase blood circulation thereby increasing the heart's demand for oxygen. See if you can get to the 30-minute mark every day. The minutes do add up!

THE PLAN:

Read this [article](#) on the Seven Primal Movements and how to make sure you are getting them in. (Technogym.com)

Watch this animated video, "[23 and 1/2 hours: What is the single best thing we can do for our health?](#)" on YouTube. (10 minutes)

Listen to this interview from [The Model Health Show featuring Dr. Kelly McGonigal](#) entitled, "Why Does Movement Matter?" (1 hour)

THE PRACTICE:

Start with 10 minutes of stretching on the floor before beginning your day. Then, take a 15-minute walk as a break from the computer or work task. Finish with 5 minutes of jumping jacks on a commercial break when the TV is on. That's 30 minutes of movement! Exercise in the ways your body moves *naturally*: bending, twisting, stretching, squatting, and reaching, etc. There is no substitute for the basics!

DAY 6: NEBULIZING

The body's most essential nutrient is water. Water plays a vital role in every function of the human body, including maintenance of the body's structures, energy production, temperature regulation, digestion, healing, detoxification, and mental acuity. On average, 55-65% of the adult human body is water; and because the body cannot produce the water it needs, hydration is a requirement for life. In terms of quality of life, it can be said that when we consume adequate amounts of water, we support the body's propensity for wellness.

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THE PLAN:

Read this article on [the basics of home nebulizing from the Cleveland Clinic](#).

Watch this video called [Nebulized Glutathione from Dr. Elana Roumell of Nourish Medical Center](#).

YouTube (5 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

For a small investment ranging from \$20 - \$50 for an at-home nebulizer, you can practice nebulizing to help your body fight viruses, respiratory issues, bacteria, and increase oxygenation.



DAY 7: HYDROTHERAPY

Have you ever enjoyed the soothing effect of a warm bath on sore muscles or applied a cold compress to reduce swelling to an inflamed joint? If so, then you have experienced the benefits of hydrotherapy.

Hydrotherapy, the practice of using water in a therapeutic way, is an approach to healing so ancient that it predates Hippocrates, “the father of medicine” (himself an advocate for bathing as a restorative ritual). Many different therapies fall under the heading of hydrotherapy: sitz bath, steam bath, sauna, compress, wrap, contrast showers, hot fomentation, hydrotherapy via pool, or steam inhalation. These all employ water in its various forms (solid, liquid, or gas) to stimulate the physiology of the body and encourage physical, mental, and spiritual healing.

THE PLAN:

Take a look at Dr. Casey Rohrbeck’s [Home Hydrotherapy Guide](#) to get started with your own hydrotherapy routine. Website: drcaseyrohrbeck.com

Watch [this short documentary called “Hydrotherapy”](#) to appreciate the impact that water can have on health and well-being. (6 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

Start with a hot-to-cold-water shift at the end your next shower (contrast hydrotherapy). If you have a handheld shower head, take it slow: start with just the feet one day, then move up to the feet and lower legs the next day, gradually increasing your time in the cold water until you can brave a head-to-toe submersion.

DAY 8: LYMPHATIC SYSTEM AND LYMPHATIC MASSAGE

To find some of the most awe-inspiring and powerful infrastructure in the world, look no further than the human body. The body's vascular system is composed of a network of vessels and organs that move blood and lymph through the body. Of the two, lymph is the lesser known but don't let that fool you.

The lymphatic system is one of the body's most essential systems, playing a key role in waste removal, fat absorption, and immune response. It's the silent workhorse of elimination. In fact, for many, familiarity with the lymph begins with the experience of the nodes in the neck or groin swelling in response to infection. Unlike blood, which circulates throughout the body, lymph flows towards the neck, then to the heart, eventually ending in our elimination organs. Over the course of its journey, lymph transports white blood cells (lymphocytes), proteins, lipids, cellular debris, viruses and bacteria. As lymph passes through the body's 600 to 700 lymph nodes, macrophages consume the debris, viruses and bacteria. Along with these nodes, organs including the spleen, thymus, tonsils, adenoids, and Peyer's patches contain lymphoid tissues that are integral to the body's immune response.

Lymph is not moved by a pump, as the blood is. Rather, it is moved by intrinsic contractions and extrinsic force, in which we must play a part. This is where breathing, hydration, and daily movement come in. These powerful tools provide many benefits: they help lymph move through the body, fight infection, remove waste, and assist in digestion. In the days ahead, we'll dig deeper into the use of castor oil packs and dry skin brushing, two additional methods for stimulating the lymph.

THE PLAN:

The aptly nick-named Lymph Queen, Lisa Levitt Gainsley of [The Lymphatic Message](#), has a new book out entitled, *The Book of Lymph: Self-Care Practices to Enhance Immunity, Health, and Beauty* and offers bite-size [tutorials](#) on her Instagram channel, [@thelymphaticmessage](#).

Watch this video that describes in detail [how the lymphatic drainage system works](#) from Cancer Research UK. (2 minutes)

Listen to this podcast called [Are Poor Drainage and Lymphatics the Root Cause of Your Disease with Dr. Perry Nickleston](#) from the Ancient Health Podcast. (1 hour)

THE PRACTICE:

Endeavor to assist the lymph in any way you can. Try performing manual lymph massage in the morning, drinking plenty of water (see Day 4), exercising (see Day 5), eating fruits and vegetables (see Day 12), and avoiding adding to the muck by eating clean.

DAY 9: CASTOR OIL PACKS

Castor oil is widely considered to be the oldest herbal medicine. Before we had any of the modern health technologies or experimentation we do today, we had plants. In the ancient world (and the modern one), plants were key components of the healing arts. And while some had properties more 'mystical' in nature, castor oil is among those with applications well-studied and documented over millennia. Castor oil, a byproduct of the castor bean plant (*Ricinus communis*), appears in Arabic medical texts under the name "*Dohn el-Khirwa*", Biblically (in Hebrew) as "*kikaion*", in Roman texts as "*Palma Christi*", and in ancient Egypt as "*kiki*". That the healing properties of this plant are mentioned across time, cultures, and continents underscores the point: castor oil offers powerful medicinal potential.

Nowadays, a growing body of research supports the practice of applying castor oil packs to parts of the body, particularly the abdomen, to stimulate the liver, colon, and lymphatic system and support their immunological function. To realize desired benefits, a once-daily application for a minimum of 30-40 minutes is recommended over a series of consecutive days (three or more). To learn more about the use of castor oil to aid the body's natural function, take a moment to review the resources provided below. Plus! Having a castor oil session provides built-in relaxation, stillness, and down-time (but be sure to protect your surfaces since the oil can stain.)

THE PLAN:

To learn more about castor oil packs, this [article](#) from thechalkboardmag.com called "Why Bother with Castor Oil Packs" discusses their historical significance and how to use them. (3 minutes)

For the DIY-ers out there, watch [this video](#) from Julie Thom of Fitomize Fitness called "How to Do a Castor Oil Pack" on YouTube. (4 minutes)

THE PRACTICE

To try a castor oil pack, you can purchase a complete pack online for about \$45. Spend a minimum 30 minutes with castor oil-soaked linen situated on the abdomen, slightly to the right side to detoxify the liver. Be sure to protect any surfaces with old clothes or a drop cloth.

DAY 10: DRY SKIN BRUSHING

Don't call it a wellness fad. Dry skin brushing (like castor oil packs) has been around since the dawn of civilization. You might have come across celebrities promoting dry skin brushing as a method of exfoliation good for enhancing the skin's appearance or diminishing cellulite. While the practice may be making a resurgence thanks to the endorsements, dry skin brushing has, in fact, been utilized for thousands of years to support the body's natural systems for detoxification.

Dry skin brushing helps eliminate toxins two ways. First, it encourages dilation of the skin's capillaries which allow the venting of toxins. When the capillaries are fully dilated, the skin has six times the toxin-eliminating potential of the lungs. Dry skin brushing is also significant for its ability to stimulate the circulatory system. Through the application of quick, feather-light strokes applied with a short-bristle brush, the interstitial fluid in the body is able to effectively move toxins into the lymph. As brush strokes progress upwards toward the thoracic and lymphatic ducts, circulation of the lymph is encouraged, allowing the body to move toxins into eliminating organs. Deep breathing and gentle movement at the joints further stimulate this process.

While dry skin brushing is often recommended as part of an energizing morning routine, consider trying this practice out before bed. This allows the body's toxin-eliminating organs to take advantage of the decreased metabolic activity to more effectively remove unwanted waste during the night.

THE PLAN:

Read this [article on dry brushing and the benefits](#) from the Cleveland Clinic.

Watch this short [video from Goop called How To Dry Brush](#) (1 minute)

THE PRACTICE:

If dry skin brushing is new to you, do a little research to better understand this practice and how it can benefit your health. A good dry brush costs about \$35. When you're ready to give it a try, find a set time each day to integrate dry skin brushing into your self-care routine.

DAY 11: DIET AND LOCAL FOOD

We all know that what we eat matters. But today's terrain of fad diets, eating trends, and what the latest scientific research is touting can leave us confused about what is best for our unique constitution. Let's look at food through three lenses: First, the *microcosmic* view of how it feels in our bodies--how does what we consume make us feel? Second, the mid-level view--where does the food come from and how is it produced? Third, the *macrocosmic* level--how does what I eat impact the planet and nature as a whole? Each bite we take can tell us so much.

Once you know what feels good for your own body, from vegetarian to paleo, then you can assess where and how to get the food that feels good to you. When we zoom out, our food habits become entries into the larger story of our environment and food producers as well. When we consume foods that are produced close to home, we increase the potential that those foods are fresher, higher in nutritive value, genetically more diverse, and safer due to the accountability local growers have to their communities. And buying local impacts the environment, reducing the number of emissions required for food to travel from producer to consumer and helping sequester carbon in local soils. Buying local impacts our communities, creating relationships between producers and consumers, supporting the economies of local agriculture and protecting the landscape.

THE PLAN:

Read this [article](#) written by author Michael Pollan that provides useful links to food-finding sources.

Watch this [TEDTalk with Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn](#) talk about the relationship of diet to cancer and heart disease. (15 minutes)

Listen to this podcast with [Suzy Amis Cameron about the One Meal a Day for the Planet Movement](#). If everyone on the planet switched one of their meals per day to plant-based, we could reverse climate change. (40 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

First, when you eat a meal or drink a beverage, be mindful of how you feel during and especially afterwards. Then, take a broader view of where your diet needs come from. Try eating seasonally and fresh. Lastly, get the 30,000-foot-view of what your eating habits do for the global climate crisis. It's true that you *can* do something for your health and the health of the planet. Eat less meat. Eat locally. Feel better.

DAY 12: APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) has been used for centuries to cure a remarkable number of ailments. Far from its reputation as a “folk” remedy, ACV has been part of medicine for 7,000 years helping to lower blood sugar and cholesterol, protect against the constant flux of bacteria in the gut, assisting smooth digestion and elimination, fighting germs, preventing heartburn, and balancing the body’s inner Ph level, among other things. Many experts also tout its benefits as a facial toner, hair tonic, and as a topical treatment for eczema.

ACV is made through a process called fermentation, essentially mixing crushed apples with yeast and sugar to produce a liquid called acetic acid (more on fermentation on Day 14). You might find apple cider vinegar that has been pasteurized and filtered at your local grocery store, but the real health benefits come from the raw, unfiltered ACV where you can see a filmy sediment called “the mother”. This hazy spider-web-like substance is the bacterial colony responsible for all of ACV’s medicinal properties and, when ingested, does the most work.

THE PLAN:

National Apple Cider Vinegar Day officially debuted on September 23, 2021! Learn more about the fascinating history of this once-boozy elixir from [NationalToday.com](https://www.nationaltoday.com).

Watch this introductory [video from Mama Natural on Apple Cider Vinegar](#) and “the mother” on YouTube. (4 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

Since not everyone applauds ACV for its taste sensation, start by mixing ACV into a salad dressing or a smoothie. Then, try mixing it with your daily intake of water to enjoy the benefits. And if you’re feeling brave, shoot a sip straight from the bottle for maximum effect.

DAY 13: ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS

Though 'fats' have had a bad rap for years, wrongly touted as the cause of heart disease, Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) are not only good for your health, they're, well, essential. Essential Fatty Acids, which include omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, constitute the majority of the polyunsaturated fats that humans consume. This particular breed of fats helps to reduce the risk of heart disease and is required by many of the body's biological processes.

Why are EFAs essential? First, our bodies cannot produce them. Instead, the body relies on us to consume them in the course of our diet. Second, the body utilizes EFAs in many of its most vital metabolic processes, including the formation of healthy cell membranes, development and function of the nervous system, regulation of the adrenals and thyroid, hormone production, the growth of healthy skin and hair, and the transport and breakdown of cholesterol. And don't forget that Essential Fatty Acids also help regulate clotting, immune and inflammatory responses, blood pressure, and liver function.

To get the omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids you need, be sure to include a diversity of fish (salmon, herring, sardines), leafy greens, nuts (walnuts, almonds), seeds (chia, pumpkin, sunflower), and oils (flaxseed, hemp, extra-virgin olive oil) in your diet.

THE PLAN:

Looking to better understand the impact different types of fats have on the body? Read [this short article](#) from the Mayo Clinic on dietary fat.

Watch this [video from Dr. Josh Axe on the benefits of Omega-3 Fatty Acids](#). (3 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

Take a close look at your EFA intake over the course of one week; you may wish to write down your meals and snacks in a food journal like [this one](#) from the CDC. Once you can see your meals up close, assess whether or not you are taking in all the omega-3s and omega-6s your body needs. And if not, where can you add them in?



DAY 14: FERMENTED FOODS AND PROBIOTICS

In the era of climate change, it is perhaps easier than ever to appreciate the very fragile balance among living and non-living things that sustains the complex perfection of the natural world. And while we cannot see it, science has proven that within each human body there is a complex system of life, similar to the one we can see, that is likewise fragile and essential. This fragile and largely unseen universe is the gut microbiome, and it exists within the gastrointestinal tract of the human body. The GI tract begins at the mouth and ends with the colon, with a surface area equal to that of a full-size tennis court. The tract is lined with mucosa, which interacts with the trillions of microbes that live there - equivalent to 2-4 lbs. in weight - to absorb vital nutrients and prevent harmful invaders from affecting the body's other systems.

The well-being of the gut microbiome is constantly threatened by internal and external invaders like stress and antibiotics, two of the most common disruptors. These stressors frequently lead to dysbiosis, or imbalance in the gut, which manifests physically in the form of illness or chronic conditions. The word probiotic means "to promote life". Probiotics are the microorganisms that help balance the gut microbiome. When the microflora in the digestive tract is balanced, health-promoting flora are able to reproduce and play instrumental roles in support of health and well-being: lending support to the immune system, enabling the synthesis and absorption of vitamins and essential nutrients, and participating in the metabolic activity that takes place within the gut.

Fortunately, probiotics are widely available to us through diet and in supplement form. Fermented foods like kefir, kombucha, kimchi, sauerkraut, and pickles all contain healthy doses of probiotics. When supported with a diet rich in prebiotic fiber found in fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes, the probiotics in our bodies flourish.

THE PLAN:

Start with this [introductory book](#), *Basic Fermentation: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Cultural Manipulation*, by fermentation superstar Sandor Katz. This book explains how to make your own sourdough, miso, kimchi, sour cream, and more in a pocket-sized guide.

Watch this TEDTalk on the gut-brain relationship and the use of prebiotics for healthy gut microbiome called "[How Your Belly Controls Your Brain](#)" with [Ruairi Robertson, PhD](#). (15 minutes)

For a deeper dive into the gut microbiome, listen to this [podcast episode](#) with Dr. Will Bulsiewicz, a.k.a. Dr. B from www.theplantfedgut.com on the Rich Roll podcast called, "Heal Your Gut, Sidestep Disease and Thrive." (3 hours)

THE PRACTICE:

Give naturally rich probiotic and prebiotic foods a try! Look for these foods the next time you're at the grocery store or the farmer's market: kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, fermented beets, sourdough bread, and kombucha.

DAY 15: NUTRACEUTICALS

Have you ever taken a vitamin C supplement or echinacea to stave off an oncoming cold? Or maybe you take extra vitamin D in the winter at your doctor's suggestion. These are nutraceuticals, products derived from food sold in medicinal form. There is evidence that these supplements, when properly used, can help prevent disease or improve the body's normal biological functions.

The body is a complex mechanism, and it relies on a proper balance of nutrients to function properly. But balance can be difficult to achieve. While eating well is the best way to deliver nutrients to the body, other aspects of our daily lives intervene to complicate the equation. When we don't get adequate sun exposure, take time to have fun, or hydrate properly, for instance, our systems can easily become dysregulated. It is then that we might ingest nutraceuticals to supply part of the solution, at least in the short term.

Supplementing diet with nutraceuticals is a common approach to re-balancing the health of the body. Depending on your individual situation, your doctor may advise you to select a supplement that includes vitamins, minerals, amino acids, medical herbs or other botanicals. It is always best practice to consult with a medical professional who understands your individual health situation before adding nutraceuticals to your health regimen.

THE PLAN:

Start by reading this blog article from [Dr. Mark Hyman called, "Do you need supplements?"](#)

Watch this informative webinar from the [National Institutes of Health's Office of Dietary Supplements](#) called "Dietary Supplements: What You Need to Know" on YouTube. (1 hour)

THE PRACTICE:

Because dietary supplements are not regulated by the FDA, it can be difficult as a consumer to know what is safe and effective. Start with a complete high-quality, high-potency multi-vitamin that has a [USP verified mark](#). Check to make sure you are supplementing your diet with a vitamin B complex, vitamin D, omega-3, and omega-6 fatty acids (see Day 13). And remember, you can always request testing data from the manufacturer or ask your doctor for his or her trusted brands.

DAY 16: SLEEP HYGIENE

We all know that humans need air, water, and food to live, but we need sleep too. Sleep isn't a luxury. It's also not something to be dispensed with when it's inconvenient. In fact, good sleep is among the most significant contributors to optimal health.

Biologically, sleep allows many of the body's most significant processes to occur. As we sleep, the body's parasympathetic - "rest and digest" - system takes over, encouraging healing and repair and counteracting the physiological effects of stress on the body. Simultaneously, other systems are synthesizing hormones, growing muscle, repairing tissue, and restoring energy. And let's not overlook the brain. As we sleep, the brain transitions our memories, moving them from short- to long-term storage in a process called "consolidation".

It is pretty remarkable that our bodies have been designed with their own in-house repair mechanisms; we have an obligation to give those mechanisms the time they need to do a quality job. How much sleep time do we need every day? This depends on several factors, including age. It is recommended that school-age children, for instance, get between 9 and 11 hours each night, while adults typically require between 7 and 9 hours. When we don't get quality sleep, we not only deprive the body of recovery time, we actually inflict more stress to the body, which only sleep or other parasympathetic rituals, like prayer and meditation, can undo.

Establishing an individualized sleep "hygiene" routine that facilitates quality sleep is among the best things we can do for ourselves. Perhaps your routine includes a relaxing bath or cup of herbal tea. No matter your sleep style, make a concerted effort to follow these ground rules: keep your room cool and dark, banish any light-emitting or Wi-Fi devices, and wake up and go to bed at more or less the same time every day (weekends included).

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THE PLAN:

An excellent resource for sleep health and science comes from the self-described "sleep diplomat", Dr. Matt Walker. His website, sleepdiplomat.com, contains links to his podcast, YouTube videos, interviews, books (including the International Bestseller *Why We Sleep*), and more.

For a deep dive into the science of sleep, watch this [webinar discussion with doctors Zach Bush and Peter Cummings](#), called "Sleep: Restoration, Recovery, and Regeneration". (1.75 hours).

Bookmark this podcast entitled, "[Sleep Toolkit: Tools for Optimizing Sleep](#)" with neuroscientist Andrew Huberman, Ph.D., of [The Huberman Lab](#). (1 hour 40 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

Turn off your devices. Don't eat late at night, especially sugary foods or caffeine. Dim the lights earlier. Tune in to your circadian rhythm. As best you can, establish a routine time that you go to sleep. Keep your bedroom cool, quiet, and as dark as possible. Do your best to start (and stick to) a wind-down ritual that helps you get quality rest every day.

DAY 17: GROUNDING

Electricity is all around us. And whether or not we're conscious of it, it's within us, playing a part in the everyday functions of our bodies.

The human body is a fabulous conductor. And for thousands of years we evolved in regular connection with the Earth's surface, which sustains a negative charge thanks to phenomena like lightning. When we are physically connected to Earth's surface and unimpeded by non-conductors like asphalt or rubber, we experience the equalizing effects of electron transfer from the negative charge of the Earth's surface. Disconnected from the earth, we become electrified as we absorb the electricity in our environment, including our positively-charged atmosphere under normal weather conditions and ambient electric and electromagnetic fields.

Today, a growing body of research suggests that connection with the earth isn't just for beach-goers and barefoot runners; it's good for all of our health. Grounding, or 'earthing', is a therapeutic technique that restores that connection between the Earth's surface and the human body, allowing for the transfer of free electrons. It includes a variety of activities and technologies; but at its simplest, grounding involves sitting or standing on natural earth, ideally for 30 minutes or more a day.

Research, such as [this](#), has shown that restoring the connection between the earth and the human body helps fight inflammation, improve sleep, and neutralize free radicals which have been linked to illness and aging. Additional studies suggest grounding may also help alleviate pain and stress. At the very least, it's doing a small part to reverse our culture's so-called "Nature Deficit Disorder."

THE PLAN:

Read this blog from [Dr. Robert Kiltz \(Earthing and Grounding: Science, Benefits and How-to\)](#) to get the 4-1-1 on all things grounding. Curious to learn more? Check out the full-length, award-winning [The Earthing Movie](#) to learn more about this practice and its implications for health. (1.25 hours)

Another deep dive, but so worth it! This podcast episode with [Drs. Zach Bush and Rangan Chatterjee on Live Better, Feel More](#) says it all: we need to get back to the earth. (3 hours)

THE PRACTICE:

Outdoor Grounding: Walk on the soil barefoot, lie on a sandy beach, sit on the grass, place your hands and bare skin on the ground.

Indoor Grounding: If weather isn't cooperating, try indoor grounding! This involves using devices that mimic the earth's negative charge. You can stand on a [grounding mat](#) or sleep in grounding sheets.

DAY 18: MEDITATION

While any path to long-term health must include care for the physical body and its many organ systems, it is also essential to include care for the mind. And not to distinguish too much between the two, there is clear evidence that the well-being of the mind has major implications for physiological health.

Meditation is a technique for focusing the mind and attaining consciousness inwardly that is known to produce desirable physiological effects. Meditation can be used to gain a sense of calm and relaxation, for the purpose of inner self-reflection and transformation, or as part of a prayer practice.

Specifically, the word mindfulness has now become part of our everyday vernacular and suffused within our culture. In 1979, Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, founded the eight-week program, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, and since then more than 25,000 people have completed the evidence-based program. It is from the MBSR course that data collection on the resultant effects of meditation has emerged. New technologies like functional magnetic resonance imaging have also shown us how we can literally alter the brain's structure and function with consistent meditative practice. In other words, we can literally *rewire* our brains.

Whatever inroad you take, whatever time you have to devote, whether standing or seated, make an effort to incorporate some form of meditative practice into your self-care routine. Remember that the beauty of the practice lies within the premise that one can always begin again. No matter how far or how long the mind has been lost in thought, we can always start over with *this* moment.

THE PLAN:

Read this starter resource for those who can't possibly sit and meditate, [Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics](#) by Jeff Warren, Dan Harris, and Carlye Adler.

Watch the documentary movie, [A Joyful Mind](#), to see how meditation can impact our everyday lives. (1 hour)

Listen to this short [podcast](#) with Dr. Stephen Cabral, author of *The Rain Barrel Effect*, called, "Elicit the Relaxation Response Anytime You Need It" where he breaks down the Relaxation Response method developed by [Dr. Herbert Benson](#) of the Benson-Henry Institute. (20 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

Start small, taking 5 minutes per day to simply sit and be with yourself just as you are, whole and complete. Try 5 minutes per day for one week, then up it to 10 minutes the next week, and 15 minutes for the week after that. It's important not to try to "fix" anything or "make" something happen when you're meditating. Simply sit and experience how everything is constantly changing. After 3 weeks, assess how it has affected your connection to those around you and your reactivity.

DAY 19: YOGA FOR EVERY BODY

Yet another method of health and healing that has been around for thousands of years, the practice of yoga has countless benefits. Yoga has been studied and researched for its benefits for arthritis, obesity, self-esteem, and compassion. The word “yoga” means union. Spiritually, yoga means to join the seeker with the sought, but on a more basic physical level, yoga means joining the body, mind, and breath in the present moment.

However, yoga doesn’t have to mean twisting yourself into a pretzel or chanting in Sanskrit. There are many simple and accessible yoga practices that have tangible benefits for the body, mind, and spirit. Yin Yoga is a passive yoga practice that allows the body’s weight to stretch fascia tissue. Chair Yoga is a great style for anyone and is especially helpful for those with balance or mobility issues. Restorative Yoga is a practice that encourages a full-body surrendering for maximum relaxation. Yoga Nidra (or Yogic Sleep) is an even deeper style of yoga that has subconscious intention-setting benefits.

Scientific studies consistently show that yoga doesn’t end when the class is over either. With regular practice, regardless of the style, yoga has a “spill-over” effect into everyday life. People often report positive changes in mood, shifts in priorities and core values, an increased sense of awareness, and a greater connection to the world around them.

Regardless of shape, size, age, culture, or current life circumstance, there is a yoga out there for you.

THE PLAN:

Feel free to peruse these recommended [yoga books for beginners](#) from Yoga Basics.

Enjoy this practice video called [Yoga for Beginners: The Basics](#) by Yoga with Adriene where she explores foundational postures for absolute newbies. (40 minutes)

Read this fascinating [article](#) from Health Grinder called, “104 Evidence-Based Benefits of Yoga”, or geek out on the science behind some of the evidence with this [abstract](#) from PubMed Central.

THE PRACTICE:

Start with taking 15 minutes per day simply lying on the ground and bringing your knees into your chest, rocking from side to side, or practicing a few “cat-and-cow” movements of the spine. If you spend your day in an office, try a simple chair-based yoga session for 15 minutes during the day. Yoga truly is for every body.

DAY 20: PRACTICING GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a feeling of appreciation, an affirmation of value or goodness. Feelings of gratitude can come upon us spontaneously; they can also be nurtured.

Whether expressing gratitude is a daily habit or one to be developed for you, we can all deepen this process over time through regular practice. There is compelling evidence that expressing gratitude has a positive effect on our physiology, our relationships, and our mental well-being. People who express gratitude regularly have been found to generally be less irritable, more emotionally resilient, sleep better, and have quality relationships.

Facing obstacles in our lives is a mark of the human condition, but that does not mean that we cannot be happy. How we talk to ourselves and others - whether we choose to see the glass half-full or half-empty - is something we can exercise control over. Gratitude is the key.

THE PLAN:

Read this article on [the benefits of gratitude on physical and mental health](#) from the Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges.

Watch an inspiring TEDtalk on [how gratitude rewires your brain with psychologist Christina Costa](#). (10 minutes)

Play this podcast from [The Good Life Project featuring authors Anne Lamott, Jonathan Fields and Janice Kaplan](#)'s take on gratitude and living a grateful life.

THE PRACTICE:

Write down things that you are grateful for or simply share them with your friends. Or, start a group text thread that includes simple daily gratitude text messages or fill a [gratitude jar](#) with notes of what you're grateful for throughout the year. (HINT: having "prompts" from a [gratitude journal](#) are a great way to jump start this habit).



DAY 21: STOCK YOUR NATURAL MEDICINE CABINET

Welcome to the last day of the **21-Day Reset**, a comprehensive guide to getting back-to-basics and tuning in to the body's natural healing capabilities!

For the past 20 days, we have provided tools for reconnecting with nature to heal and restore balance for the body, mind, and spirit. Now that you have the resources and information to bring about life-long *habits*, let's talk about practical items to have on-hand in your Natural Medicine Cabinet. There are many things to keep handy in case of an acute illness or for minor cuts and scrapes. The goal being to take more responsibility and agency for your own healing the way nature intended.

Here are just a few of the remedies and natural medicines that may even replace your over-the-counter pharmaceutical versions!

- *Arnica montana* (homeopathic remedy): For bruises and muscle aches.
- *Peppermint oil* (essential oil remedy): A headache reliever.
- *Calendula* (herbal remedy): A natural first-aid cream for wounds and burns.
- *Echinacea Flower* (herbal remedy): To combat colds and infections.
- *Elderberry Syrup* (herbal remedy): To stave off colds.
- *Baking Soda* (natural remedy): To manage acid reflux and heartburn.
- *Bach Rescue Remedy* (floral essence remedy): Use as a stress reducer.

THE PLAN:

Start by reviewing the No home should be without the encyclopedia of natural remedies, the [Prescription for Nutritional Healing by Phyllis A. Balch, CNC](#), a great resource for stocking a natural medicine cabinet.

Read this excellent [blog](#) from Aviva Romm, MD, called, "Detox Your Medicine Cabinet: 26 Natural Remedies for Common Symptoms," from her website, [avivaromm.com](#).

Watch this brief video on [natural remedies to boost your immune system with Dr. Margaret Scandura](#) of Bassett Health Center. YouTube (3 minutes)

THE PRACTICE:

Start to maintain a basket or a small tote and begin to fill it with the top 12 essential healing items from nature's *farmacy*. Swap out your expired over-the-counter medications and over time, you will have your very own Natural Medicine Cabinet stocked and ready for action.



THANK YOU

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