



21-DAY RESET RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK

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DAY 1: SUNSHINE AND NATURAL VITAMIN D

Any journey towards self-renewal and healing must begin somewhere. Why not begin with one of nature's most incredible gifts: the sun? In the quest for health, the sun wields incredible power. Most notably, natural Vitamin D, a.k.a. Vitamin Sun, can help our body absorb calcium and is thought to regulate at least 1,000 different genes governing nearly every tissue in the body. Not only that, Vitamin D plays a sentinel role, which means that it's used by the immune system to fight infection, help control the immune response, and limit inflammation. By tempering the immune system in this way, it can keep it from overworking and wearing down.

Getting adequate sunlight and Vitamin D are vital to better sleep, stress reduction, the maintenance of strong bones, and the production of serotonin to support a calm and focused mood. When you think about it, the sun is as integral to our wellbeing as water and air, so bask in its glow!

Learn:

Read this short [book](#) entitled, *Vitamin D Prescription: The Healing Power of the Sun & How It Can Save Your Life* by Eric Madrid, MD.

Listen to this [podcast](#) called, "Why Sunlight Is Vital for Health & Immunity with Dr. Roger Seheult" on the Commune podcast, hosted by Jeff Krasno.

Explore:

Spend 10 – 30 minutes around midday several times a week 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 at all.

Reflect:

How do you feel when you spend time in the sunshine? What effect does being outside have on your mood? What can you do to sustain 30 minutes of sun exposure a few times a week?

DAY 2: HAVE REAL FUN

Playfulness. Connection. Flow. According researcher and author Catherine Price, these three ingredients are essential to having “true” fun. But how often do we prioritize play? Do we set aside time each day or is it relegated to one vacation per year? Frivolity 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.*

Learn

Read the [book](#), *The Power of Fun: How to Feel Alive Again* by Catherine Price, to learn about why fun is essential to longevity.

Listen to the [podcast](#), The Happiness Lab, with Dr. Laurie Santos called “Laurie Gets a Fun-tervention” to hear how you can spice up your fun-life!

Explore

Before getting out of bed, crack a smile for no reason. Take a dance break at work, jump rope, sit on a swing, submit to a tickle fight, try a cannonball in the pool. Break some rules! *Just. Have. Fun.*

Reflect

What do you do for fun? When you are having fun, how do you feel? Do you set aside time each day to play? If not, ask yourself: why not?

DAY 3: CONSCIOUS BREATHING

Oxygen is fundamental for life. Controlled by our autonomic nervous system, we don't need to think about breathing unless something inhibits it. However, we should think about *how* we breathe and form new habits that will allow us to breathe *deeply* every day. Shallow breathing can stimulate the sympathetic nervous system, sending a signal to the brain to stay in fight or flight. While deeper breathing (letting each breath fill the abdomen), triggers the relaxation response sending a signal to the brain to *slow down*. One way to do this is to practice belly breathing, or abdominal breathing. Think of your inhalation as your gas pedal and your exhalation as your brake pedal.

As you breathe, does your body rise and fall or move out and in?

Try practicing belly breathing using a four-four-eight rhythm: Inhale for a count of four, hold for a count of four, then exhale for a count of eight. Repeat the cycle four times until it becomes a habit.

Learn

Read this [article](#) from Healthline.com called, "Taking a Better Breath," with pointers on the anatomy of breathing and how the diaphragm is a key component of deep breathing.

Learn to breathe better using specific trainings on the Peak Flow [app](#) available on Android and iPhone.

Explore

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!

Reflect How often do you consciously attend to your breath? How do you feel when you breathe with intention? When can you take time in your day to take 10 deep breaths?

DAY 4: DRINKING WATER

Water is the single most important and miraculous nutrient available to humans. And for the most part, it's absolutely free. Water makes up a high percentage of the body's composition--each of us is an average of 60% water. Yet we don't have the ability to produce a necessary quantity for survival on our own, which is why **hydration is a requirement for life**. Water plays a starring 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. 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. So, if you changed nothing about your daily routine except increasing your daily intake of water, that alone would dramatically shift your health in a positive direction. How do you feel when you embrace this life-giving element?

Learn

Read this [book](#) entitled, *Water for Health, For Healing, For Life: You're Not Sick, You're Thirsty!* by F. Batmanghelidj, MD.

Explore the science of hydration with this short [podcast](#) from NPR's Life Kit called, "How Much Water Does Your Body Really Need?"

Explore

Calculate the approximate minimum amount of water you need to remain hydrated. For most people, the formula is: body weight (pounds) \div 2 = water (ounces). When we consume adequate amounts of water, we support the body's own propensity towards healing.

Reflect

Are you getting enough water each day? If not, what adjustments can you make to reach your target number of ounces?

DAY 5: FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

Movement is key to health and staving off a host of illnesses. We all know the body needs to move, and the good news is that we don't have to spend hours at the gym in order to gain the benefits of movement such as increased endurance, better mobility, balance, and flexibility. 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 best way to achieve health with these so-called "primal" movements is to elevate your heart rate, which will increase blood circulation thereby increasing the heart's demand for oxygen. Putting your focus on becoming functionally fit lowers the mental barriers to health and is good for the body. There is no substitute for the basics!

Learn

Watch this [TEDxTalk](#) called, "Movement as Medicine" with Mike Young for insights on how important movement is to combatting illness.

Need inspiration? Pick up this tiny [book](#), *Movement Snacks: A Creative How-to Guide for Inviting More Movement into Your Daily Life* by Trisha Durham featuring 52 bite-sized movements to add to your life.

Explore

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 deep knee bends 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, reaching, etc.

Reflect

Are you spending at least 30 minutes each day moving your body? If not, what's getting in the way? Evaluate your movement routines; where is there room to grow?

DAY 6: NEBULIZING

The air we breathe contains amounts of toxins that we inhale throughout the day in varying degrees. While air is mostly gas, it also contains millions of tiny particles such as viruses, dust, pollen, soot, car exhaust, chemicals, fumes, and other nasty toxins. An at-home nebulizer is an electric-powered machine that administers liquids automatically in a mist form. The word “nebulize” simply means to convert a liquid into a fine spray, especially when administering medicine or a supplement. Nebulizing can be used with certain supplements to increase the body’s respiratory and cleansing faculties and has been used for decades in order to support patients with chronic asthma, sinusitis, or COPD. However, everyone can benefit from nebulizing a common element called *glutathione*, nature’s Master Antioxidant. A nebulizer transforms the glutathione powder within saline liquid into a mist that is then inhaled so particles can be deposited directly in to the nasal mucosa, sinuses, brain, bronchi, and lungs. While the body does a good job at filtering the nasty toxins we ingest every day, why not help it out by making nebulizing a part of your wellness routine?

Learn

Watch this [short video](#) from Forum Health in Austin, TX, for the 4-1-1 on using a nebulizer specifically for glutathione.

Dig the science? Check out this [PubMed Central article](#) on how glutathione neutralizes free radicals and reduces oxidative stress.

Explore

For a small investment (around \$50 for the machine), you can practice nebulizing at home to help your body fight viruses, respiratory issues, bacteria, and increase oxygenation. As a basic daily treatment, add 5ml of saline and 1 capsule of reduced [glutathione](#) (specific for nebulization) to the medicine cup and nebulize until the liquid is gone (about 20 mins).

Often overlooked as a health habit, in this [podcast episode called](#), “Is this the missing health modality you’ve been looking for?”, Dr. Thom boils down the benefits of nebulizing with his daughter, Julie Thom.

Reflect

How much exposure do I have to polluted air, toxic food, and dirty water? What is my work environment like as far as air quality? Is my home environment healthy? How can nebulizing become part of my routine?

DAY 7: HYDROTHERAPY

The practice of using water in a therapeutic way, also called hydrotherapy, is an approach to healing so ancient that it predates Hippocrates, the O.G. of medicine. (Hippocrates himself was an advocate for bathing as a restorative ritual). Many different therapies fall under the heading of hydrotherapy and are all accessible and affordable: steam bath, sitz bath, sauna, moist compresses, hot fomentation, steam inhalation, and [wet sock therapy](#) for sinus congestion. These techniques 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. Have you ever enjoyed the soothing effect of a warm eucalyptus bath on sore muscles? If so, then you have experienced the benefits of hydrotherapy.

Learn

Read this informative [book](#), *Hydrotherapy: Simple Treatments for Common Ailments* by Clarence Dail, MD, and Charles Thomas, MD, for all the ways hydrotherapy can work for you.

Listen to this [podcast](#) from Dr. Andrew Huberman called “Using Deliberate Cold Exposure for Health and Performance” on how to start a hydrotherapy habit.

Explore

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.

Reflect

What role does water play in your story of health and healing? Can you recall times when water, in some form, has played a therapeutic role? How might you further integrate hydrotherapy into your plan for long-term health?

DAY 8: LYMPHATIC SYSTEM

The importance of the lymphatic system for health cannot be overstated. 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, purging as it goes to be reabsorbed into the body.

Unlike other systems in the body with pumps and valves, our lymphatic system cannot pump out the waste on its own. 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.

Fun fact! Lymph exists in the cranium, too! In 2012, the [glymphatic system](#) was discovered and is an even teenier waste disposal system in the head that feeds into the larger lymphatic system.

Learn

Read this fantastic book by renowned cardiologist Gerald M. Lemole, MD, *Lymph and Longevity: The Untapped Secret to Health* which includes graphs, charts, recipes, and yoga poses to aid in the flow!

Spend a few minutes with this simple but informative [cartoon](#) explanation on the lymph system to get the basics of how lymphatics functions from Science ABC.

For a personal touch to assist lymph movement in the face and neck, check out the newest tool from Medella Health, the [Flow Vibrate](#).

Explore

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.

Reflect

Take time to reflect on the condition of your lymphatic system. What clues do you have as to the state of its health? What might you do to help lymph move more freely through the body?

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.

Learn

To learn more about castor oil packs, read this straight forward [blog post](#) from BioMed Network Provider Dr. Melina Roberts of Advanced Naturopathic Medical Centre in Calgary.

For a breakdown of all things castor oil, listen to Connecting with the Thom's [podcast episode](#), "Castor Oil - Is this the miracle oil you've been missing?" with the father-daughter duo, Julie Thom and Dr. Dickson Thom.

Take a deeper dive on the entire lymphatic system by watching this [YouTube explainer](#) called, "Basics and Structures of the Lymphatic System," from Catalyst University.

Explore

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

Reflect

Knowing your own habits and exposures to everyday toxins, how do you see yourself using a castor oil pack? Channel you inner Cleopatra and find out!

DAY 10: DRY SKIN BRUSHING

Dry skin brushing (like castor oil) has been around since the dawn of civilization. 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 a morning exfoliation regimen, consider trying this practice out *before* bed as part of a detox plan instead. 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.

Learn

Watch this great [video](#) from Kristen Horner Warren that explains why we dry skin brush for lymph health (demo for dry skin brushing starts at minute nine)!

Still our fave [book](#) on the subject is Lisa Levitt Gainsely's, *The Book of Lymph: Self-Care Practices to Enhance Immunity, Health, and Beauty*. It's a must-read if you want to know all the tools for taking care of the lymph, including dry skin brushing.

Explore

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.

Reflect

Before embarking down the dry skin brush path, reflect on how the skin contains all that happens within your body while protecting you from all that goes on outside. Ask yourself, how can you add in this simple practice before bedtime?

DAY 11: DIET

Food is a hallmark of the human experience. And as diverse as humans are, the human diet - what we eat and drink - is a reflection of many factors: family upbringing, culture, age, geography, availability, preferences and aversions, individual biology, and more. It should not come as a surprise, then, that there is no panacea when it comes to diet and long-term health.

But there are basic guidelines we can follow, substantiated by science and human experience. Research published in the [International Journal of Epidemiology](#), for example, links a daily intake of 800 grams of fruits and vegetables (10 servings) with significant risk reductions in terms of heart disease, cardiovascular disease, and stroke as well as premature death. Further research encourages a diet rich in the following: essential fatty acids (seeds, oils), probiotics, a diversity of vitamins including Vitamin B (fish, grains, nuts, seeds, dark leafy greens) and Vitamin D (fish/fish oil), and phytosterols (nuts, seeds, legumes).

And it's not just about what we eat, it's also about how we eat. Much like a mechanical engine, our digestive system performs optimally under certain conditions. If our body could offer an operating manual, it would encourage us to eat slowly and to build in extra minutes for digestion, to allow cold foods to warm before consuming, and to chew a lot. It would also encourage us to avoid liquids while eating (these can dilute nutrient absorption) and advise us to use apple cider vinegar to prime the digestive pump.

Learn

Watch this [video](#) with Dr. Rupy Aujila called "The Role of Food in Health" on how culinary medicine instead of fad diets to foster health.

Get to know the Menus of Change [initiative](#) whose mission is to change the future of the food service industry one bite at a time.

Read this book by innovative nutrition educator, Kathleen DiChiara, called [End Chronic Disease](#) to learn about key strategies for optimal health, including the importance of bacteria in our bodies.

Explore

Reflect on your dietary habits in terms of the foods you eat as well as how you eat. Try to incorporate 10 servings of fruits and vegetables into your diet each day and to chew 30 - 50 times with each bite.

Reflect

Do the foods I eat encourage or impede the body's natural healing processes? Similarly, do my eating habits allow my body to "rest and digest"? What changes might I make to improve the dietary dimension of my health and well-being?

DAY 12: EATING LOCALLY

No conversation about diet, particularly what we eat, would be complete without a discussion about where our food comes from and how it's produced. There's an expression coined by Michael Pollan, author and journalist: "you are what you eat eats, too." Each bite we take has a story. The good and the ugly within that story is a narrative we can exert influence over through the way we source our food. And let's not forget that when we zoom out, our food habits become entries in the larger story of our environment and food producers, as well.

Buying local is impactful. It impacts our health: 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. Buying local impacts the environment, reducing the number of emissions required for food to travel from producer to consumer and helping sequester carbon into local soils. And buying local impacts our communities, creating relationships between producers and consumers, supporting the economies of local producers, and protecting the local landscape.

What stories would your food tell, if it could talk? How can your dietary habits change the arc of that narrative?

Learn

Do you live in southeastern Massachusetts or Rhode Island? First, see what's in season with this [infographic](#). Then, go to [SEMAP's Annual Local Resource Guide](#) to find farmers, markets, and grocers.

Check out the documentary, [Rooted](#), about how local food can transform urban communities.

Unsure how to connect with food producers near you? Click [here](#) to read a brief article written by Michael Pollan that provides useful links to food-finding resources.

Explore

Make the choice to try one food item today that comes from your local community. If you're unsure how to source local, use the resources linked above.

Check out the extensive overview of [The Food System](#) on our website. You can also help us take legislative action by joining the Marion Institute's [Southcoast Food Policy Council](#).

Reflect

What role does local food play in your daily diet? What steps can you take to further integrate locally-sourced foods into your meals in the weeks and months ahead? Who benefits, in your community, when you shop local?

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.

Learn

Want to nerd out? Check out this classic TedTalk [video](#) with longevity coach and author of *The Blue Zones*, Dan Buettner, where he talks about how EFAs are a key ingredient in living a long life.

Looking to better understand the differences between Omegas 3, 6, and 9? Read [this short article](#) from Healthline on dietary fat and how to balance the right intake of Omegas.

Explore

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. 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?

Reflect

To what extent do your food choices reflect knowledge and understanding of the body's biological needs and processes? Has cultural conditioning made you more likely or less likely to eat certain foods? What steps can you take to become a more knowledgeable consumer of information about nutrition and the foods you eat?

DAY 14: FERMENTED FOODS & 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.

Learn

Start with this staple 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.

Then, head over to this book, [*The Good Gut*](#), by Justin Sonnenburg, PhD, which explores the way the gut microbiota evolve with us and how to care for our gut for better health.

There's no shortage of resources on [*The Microbiome Podcast*](#), from the American Microbiome Institute. Check it out!

Explore

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.

Reflect

What might my health history suggest to me about the condition of my gut? Does my diet incorporate foods rich in prebiotics and probiotics? What new foods might I incorporate to further care for and diversify the flora in my gut microbiome?

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.

Learn

First, start by heading over to this [podcast](#) from Andrew Huberman of the Huberman Lab, called "Developing a Rational Approach to Supplementation for Health and Performance," to understand the why behind the what of nutraceuticals and supplementation.

Next, check out this resource, [Nutraceuticals: Safety, Efficacy and Toxicity, 2nd ed.](#), that covers herbal medicines to adaptogens, including regulatory aspects from country to country.

Explore

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.

Reflect

What steps am I taking to encourage the health of my body and provide it with what it needs to function optimally? What habits do I have that work against my body? What changes can I make to promote health and sustain balance?

DAY 16: SLEEP HYGIENE

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".

Getting good sleep and practicing good sleep hygiene is among the most significant contributors to optimal health.

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 to guarantee quality sleep is among the best things we can do for ourselves. Start with getting sunshine as soon as you wake up in the morning. This will get you in sync with your circadian rhythm. Practice following 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 (including weekends!).

Learn

A great primer for good sleep habits that have to do with light and dark cycles comes from the National Sleep Foundation. Check out this [blog](#) for simple solutions for better sleep.

An excellent resource for sleep comes from Shawn Stevenson's [Sleep Smarter](#) book which includes a "14-Day Sleep Makeover" and ways to hack sunlight to regulate your circadian rhythm.

Take the deep dive into all things sleep-related with the comprehensive podcast, [Sleep Science](#), which covers everything for synapses to insomnia.

Explore

Turn off your devices. Don't eat late at night, especially sugary foods or caffeine. Tune in to your circadian rhythm. 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. First thing in the morning, look in the direction of natural sunlight if you can.

Reflect

Under what conditions do I sleep best? What distractions or other circumstances get in the way of good sleep? What does a good sleep routine, specific to me and my needs, look like?

DAY 17: GROUNDING & EARTHING

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, research suggests that connection with the earth isn't just for beachgoers 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, improves sleep, and neutralizes 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."

Learn

Read this blog from [Barefoot Healing, Australian Earthing Specialists](#) on the benefits of earthing both indoors and outdoors for reducing inflammation and lowering stress.

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.

Explore

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.

Reflect

What is the most natural way for me to become grounded with the earth? How does it feel when I am grounded, whether walking on sand or dirt, swimming in water, or seated? How does grounding fit into my health goals and routines?

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. Mindfulness 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.

Learn

Enroll now for the Marion Institute's live-online [Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction \(MBSR\)](#) course starting on March 27th! The course runs for eight weeks on Wednesdays from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. ET and includes one full day session on Saturday, May 4th. You have the power to change your habits.

Mindfulness is the path.

Read this starter resource, [Real Happiness](#), by Sharon Salzberg, who is one of the foremost teachers of mindfulness meditation in the west. *Real Happiness* is a 28-day beginner program for exploring the power of meditation.

This excellent [article](#) called, "What Mindfulness Does to Your Brain: The Science of Neuroplasticity," in Real Simple shows you how a regular meditation practice can actually rewire the brain!

Explore

Start small, taking five minutes per day to simply sit and be with yourself just as you are, whole and complete. Try five 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 three weeks, assess how it has affected your connection to those around you and your reactivity.

Reflect

Reflect on your experience after practicing meditation. Ask yourself: "Were there places I noticed my attention was drawn to during the meditation?" (for example, body sensations, thoughts, the environment), and then ask, "What am I feeling right now?"

DAY 19: WALKING

Humans are evolutionarily designed to walk, yet as a society, we ambulate less and less every year. What are the reasons for this gradual trend away from walking every day and towards sedentary practices? The main reasons stem from an increasing reliance on vehicles, greater distances between cities and towns, and an overall increase in technological convenience. (Why take the (literal) steps to go run an errand when instant delivery is at our fingertips?) Let's face it, our modern life isn't made for walking.

Even though walking is one of the most underrated forms of exercise today, according to the Centers for Disease Control, walking can help lower the risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, and some cancers. Thankfully, most of us know the positive feeling after taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or getting outside for a quick walk around the block. Fun fact: people who walk at least 20 minutes per day five days per week had 43% fewer sick days than those who exercised once a week or less. The mental benefits of walking are also worth championing, too. One study from Stanford University found that walking increased creative output by an average of 60%! Walking has also been shown to improve memory, prevent the deterioration of brain tissue as we age, and relieve symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Learn

Check out the link to [America Walks](#), a campaign aimed at getting Americans up and moving with the goal of making walking as accessible as possible for each person in the country, no matter where and how you live.

Make sure to listen to this [podcast](#), Walking is Fitness with Dave Paul, for short, tremendously helpful tidbits on walking as the best form of exercise to fit all manner of lifestyle, location, and situation.

And, of course, there's this classic advice from Doc Mike Evans from the video [23 and ½ Hours](#) on YouTube. This short video boils down the benefits of movement (especially walking) for 30 minutes per day.

Explore

Take a few minutes to gauge how many steps you might be getting into your day. The average American walks between 3,000 and 4,000 steps per day, or roughly 1.5 to 2 miles. Make this amount your baseline. Then, see where in your day you might be able to increase this number by a few thousand steps. Consider investing in a fitness tracker, using an app on your phone, or gather friends together and form a walking group!

Reflect

What might be holding you back from walking more every day? Are there geographic restrictions or weather limitations that might be impeding the goal of moving more? How could adding more steps today benefit your mind, body, and spirit?

DAY 20: 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.

Learn

Watch an inspiring TEDtalk on gratitude in the workplace called, [The Power of Appreciation](#) with Mike Robbins, author of *Focus on the Good Stuff* and *Nothing Changes Until You Do*.

For something different, listen to this [podcast](#) to get to know “The Enemies of Gratitude” from The Hidden Brain with Shankar Vedantam.

Read this [article](#) from Harvard Health on the benefits of practicing gratitude and simple ways to achieve a daily practice.

Explore

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).

Reflect

How often do you express gratitude, to yourself or to others, in writing or aloud? What effect does expressing gratitude have on you? Does the effect change, depending on your method for expressing gratitude? How might you incorporate expressions of gratitude into your daily routines and how might that practice transform areas of your life?

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.
- ***Umcka (herbal remedy)***: For flu, cold, and respiratory illness.
- ***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.
- ***Mustard Plaster (herbal remedy)***: Use for chest congestion.
- ***Garlic (herbal remedy)***: Use to combat an infection.

DAY 21: STOCK YOUR NATURAL MEDICINE CABINET (CONT.)

Learn

Dive into the [book](#), *Your Natural Medicine Cabinet* by Burke Lennihan, RN, and learn about the invaluable natural medicinal resources to have on-hand in case of illness or injury.

No home should be without this 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 the Humbled Homemaker, Erin Odom called [The Ultimate Guide to Building a Natural Medicine Cabinet](#), broken down by ailment! Navigate around the pop-up ads to get to the valuable information inside.

Explore

Start to maintain a basket or a small tote and begin to fill it with the top 12 essential healing items from nature's *pharmacy*. 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.

Reflect

Inquire within about the amount of prescription or over-the-counter drugs that are present in your home. Ask what kinds of illnesses does my household suffer from routinely? Then ask, in what ways can my household be more natural when it comes to staving off a cold or healing from minor wounds?



THANK YOU

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