

Foundations of Health

"When the roots are deep, there is no reason to fear the wind"

Nutrition & water



Sleep



Nature connection

Gut Health



Movement



Stress and breath



I. Nutrition

We literally are what we eat. The nutrients we absorb through our food are the building blocks of our body. Due to poor diet, access to healthy food, culture, and monocropping among other things, many of us are deficient in nutrients such as Iron, iodine, vit D, B12, trace minerals, Vit A, Mg, Omega.

Along with what we eat, when we eat is also something to be mindful of. Fluctuating blood sugars can wreak havoc on a person without them even realizing (believe me I know) Snacking throughout the day on nutrient dense foods can help stabilize blood sugars.

What we eat affects every facet of our health, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Up to 90% of the neurotransmitter serotonin is produced in the gut, along with GABA and dopamine. These have huge implications on many systems, and can influence mental health, fertility, addictions, and appetite. Gut health is highly influenced by the microbiome, which are all the bacteria that live in our gut (about 5lbs of it!). Our microbiome has been termed the "second brain" because of it's vital importance in mental wellness and mood

Healing, disease management, muscle training, allergy reduction, skin clearing, detoxing, hormone balancing, blood sugar stabilization, and recovery are all goals that can be achieved in part by intentional diet and nutrition planning.

Eat as a time to connect to your food, your loved ones, and your self. In many cultures around the world, meal times are a sacred place of community. This doesn't have to be anything fancy. Turn off the TV. Chew slowly. Taste your food. Really taste it and enjoy your mealtimes



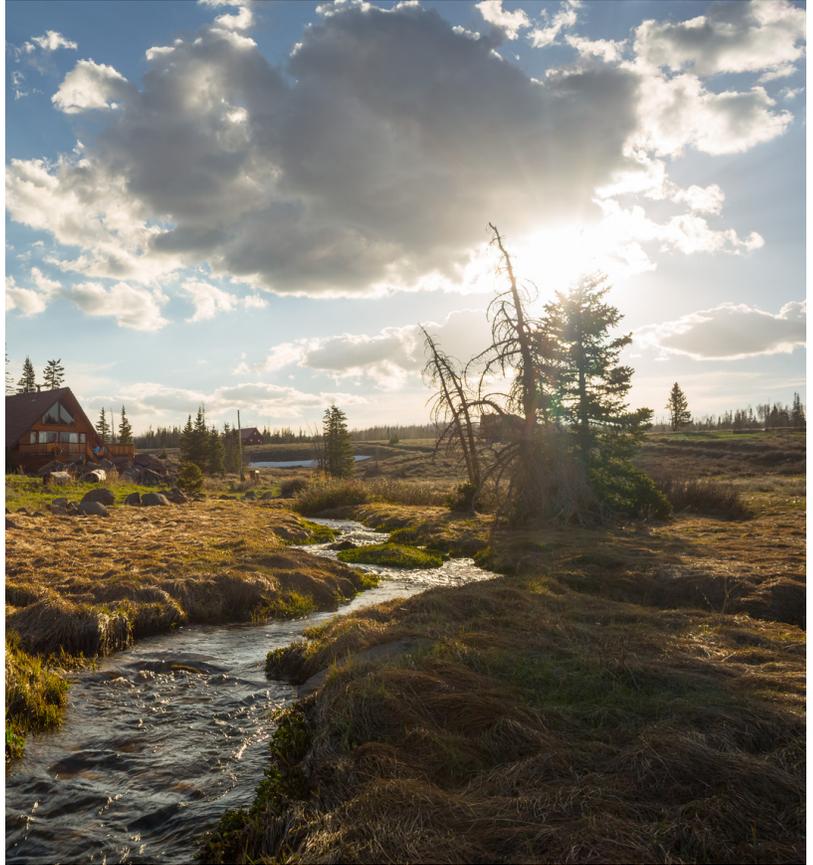
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Water

Drinking clean and fresh water every day is one of the most important things we can do to care for our mind and bodies. Water is critical in moving substances throughout the body, nurturing, nourishing, holding shape, and detoxifying. We are after all, mostly water.

A lack of hydration slows down your metabolism and goes hand in hand with circulatory and digestive problems. You may experience weight gain, food cravings, headaches, and muscle pain. Dehydration is also a trigger for the dry itchiness of eczema.



Drink enough water a day. I usually recommended at least half of your body weight (lbs) in ounces. So if you weigh 140lbs, drink 2-3L a day.

- By the time we are thirsty, we are already dehydrated.
- Sip water throughout the day. Try and make it a habit. Avoid chugging a liter at a time when you remember, as the body can't absorb it as well.
- There is a time and place for electrolytes, but often, they contain sugar and ingredients that we don't need. In general, try to stick to fresh, clean water.

II. Sleep

Sleep has a profound impact on the way we live our lives. Insomnia will quickly cause a decrease in metabolism, mental well being, detox function, and basically every system in the body. I'm sure we all know what it feels like to function on little sleep. Not great. Eventually, this will catch up to the body.

TOP TIPS FOR RESTFUL SLEEP



Routine

- Consistent bedtimes
- Meditation/breath-work
- Cup of tea
- Candlelit bath with book



No screens

- No phones/computers 30 minutes before bed
- Turn on "flux" app and other blue light blockers when sun goes down



Support

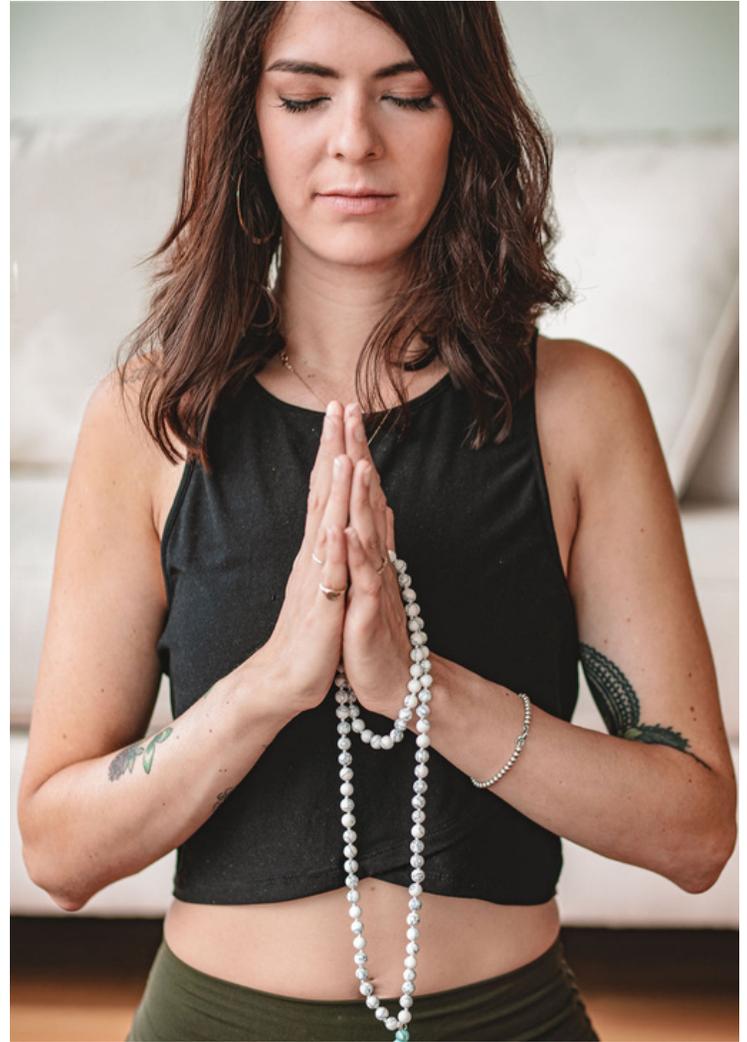
- Melatonin
- L-theanine
- Lavender essential oil
- Herbs: valerian, passionflower, kava, chamomile



III. Breath

It seems so simple, but so many of us are not doing it properly. Pay attention to your breath right now – are you breathing deep into your belly? Or shallow into your chest, like so many of us often are?

Many of us have become shallow chest breathers—inhaling through our mouth and taking in less air. This process evolved due to softer food and smaller mouths (chew your (food), and is reinforced due to environmental stressors (temperature, pollution, noise, etc) In addition, expectations, including the desire to have a flat stomach, encourage holding our breath and sucking in our stomachs, which tightens our muscles and makes it much harder to breath into our abdomens.



When we breathe this shallow, the body remains in a self perpetuating state of stress—we signal to our nervous system that we stressed, which in turn contributes to an internal state of stress via constant activation of the SNS.

One of my favourite techniques for a breath check in is a few rounds of the 4-7-8 method

- 4 seconds-Inhale
- 7 seconds- hold
- 8 seconds-exhale

Breathe in through your nose and into your belly.



4. Movement

Moving your body is necessary for any healthy foundation. It's physical benefits speak for themselves. It has more clinical evidence than antidepressants ever will for depression and mental health. If we become stagnant, our bodies will become stagnant. Dare I say your mind will too? Exercise is not only beneficial for your overall wellbeing and health, but it has proven to have many benefits for your skin and detox system as well.

Movement doesn't have to be a long run, or lifting weights in a gym. It can be whatever is sacred to you. Hiking, walking, rowing, karate, circus, running, dance, YOU NAME IT.

5. Gut health

In this section I include diet, bowel function, nutrient absorption, and microbiome. You are what you eat!

- I believe that almost all conditions in part from a leaky gut. What that means is that we are eating foods that are causing inflammation in our GI tract. These can leak out into our bodies and cause inflammation to occur in other parts of our body – such as the skin, brains, gut, joints etc.
- This also causes constipation, one of the horsemen for eczema. If we aren't pooping, we aren't eliminating toxins, and they are just getting reabsorbed into our bodies. Gross.



Whole Foods: Food should be in its most simple form, and as least processed as possible. Less packages, more food!

Nutrient Density and Variety: eat the rainbow, and change it up!

Avoid refined sugar: horrible for immune health and increases inflammation

6. Connection to nature

Our connection to nature runs deep within our bodies and souls – we are tied to this planet and are part of the great system. Here in North America, many of us have forgotten this. Our culture doesn't value connection to nature like we used to.

It's messing with us.

- Living in cities with little green space is associated with increased levels of mental illness, particularly anxiety disorders and depression.
- Living in an area which is continually exposed high levels of noise can be associated with a wide range of adverse impacts on health, quality of life and well-being.
- Those who live near green space are 24% more likely to be physically active than those who do not.
- In poorer neighborhoods of Chicago people who live near green spaces—lawns, parks, trees—show reductions in ADHD symptoms and greater calm, as well as a stronger sense of connection to neighbors, more civility, and less violence in their neighborhoods



According to a study sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency, the average American spends 93% of his or her time indoors

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