



# BIOHACKERS' UPDATE



## **BIOHACKING:**

**COVID-19,  
THE FLOW STATE,  
YOUR PANTRY AND MORE!**

# A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

What a world we live in. One minute we are riding high with our heads in the clouds, traveling from one end of the globe to the other. The next minute we're locked away in our homes, wondering when we'll be able to travel and breathe without a mask in public places. Our whole lifestyle has drastically changed because of this COVID-19 virus. While the most exciting part of our day is now taking out the trash or getting the mail, we all have been forced to be with all of this extra-time. Before they said that there was not enough time. Now they say that there is too much time. The real question is, what are we doing with this time? Are we just coasting along while we watch endless streams of movies and shows; slowly transforming ourselves into another couch pillow? Or are we using our time to think more constructively, more creatively? Yes, we may be stuck at home, but just think of all of the things we can do with our time that will actually serve us some good.

Reading, writing, painting, learning an instrument, gardening - all of these things and more can lead to our self improvement. What if we think of this quarantine as a cocoon is to a caterpillar. We enter this cocoon, nervous and vulnerable, but with patience and productive habits, together mixed with time, we emerge as butterflies, glorious and radiant, brimming with confidence knowing

that we spent our time well. This transformation happens everyday but most only see the end product - the butterfly. They often look past the many moments spent in the cocoon.

Let us not see this cocoon as a boring trap with nothing to do, but instead, let us see this as a necessary chamber to enclose ourselves in - a chamber that serves us when we put in the effort of self-improvement biohacks, habits, and hobbies. Let's use this time to truly invest in ourselves and the betterment of our characters, while we allow the Earth a few moments to catch her breath.

We had hoped to have this second issue out sooner but with everything going on in the world, it was almost impossible to release it on schedule. We wanted to be sure to present you with the best product possible, even if that meant a little bit of added time to do so. A big thank you to all of our writers, contributors, and team members, as well as our supporters and followers. Please know that we are here to continue to serve you and bring you the best biohacking information possible.

Be safe and stay strong. Peace be with you all,

Dallas McClain, Editor in Chief



# OPTISELF COACH

HEALTH OPTIMIZATION

## A NOTE ON COVID-19 BY THE OPTISELF COACH

During this particularly peculiar time in our species history, many of us have been waiting in our homes, waiting patiently for the Coronavirus, or COVID-19, to pass us by either through mild infection and additional recovery or by simply disappearing as quickly as it came. But while most focused on the symptoms of this dreadful virus, many forgot about preparing to combat it on a micro-level.

There are certain nutrients and foods that play a huge part in how well our body is prepared to fight and resist viruses. Many of us have heard of some of these before, but have taken no action to consume them because the situation did not seem too urgent or necessary at the time. However, we are now in a completely different era. A pandemic has taken the world by storm and is sadly

killing off many people, some of whom, just like us, put no thought into their nutrition and fueling their immune system's power.

The time is now. It's not too late to adapt and pivot towards a diet and supplementation plan that will ensure your immune system has a fair chance when the COVID-19 and any other virus comes knocking at your door.

With all that being said, we'd like to present you with a list of essential micronutrients and consumables that will add more pep to your immune system's defence and vitality. We'll start with the essentials and then move on to the extras. The asterisk '\*' means that the element is potentially best for combatting the COVID-19 virus.

## ESSENTIALS:

**\*Vitamin C** – Preferred form as liposomal ascorbic acid for high bioavailability

“A Micronutrient that contributes to immune defence by supporting various cellular functions of both the innate and adaptive immune system.”<sup>1</sup>

**\*Vitamin D** – Preferred form is D3 in liquid form or capsules “A Micronutrient that can modulate the innate and adaptive immune responses. Deficiency in vitamin D is associated with increased autoimmunity as well as an increased susceptibility to infection.” (2)

**\*Zinc** - Preferred form is liquid sulphate, acetate or picolinate capsules “A Micronutrient that is a critical factor that can influence antiviral immunity, particularly as zinc-deficient populations are often most at risk of acquiring viral infections.” (3) Vitamin A – Preferred form is retinol taken as capsules

“A Micronutrient that is crucial for maintaining mucus integrity in the body and enhancing immune function.” (4)

**Probiotics** – Preferred strains from Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium “Probiotics regulate host innate and adaptive immune responses by modulating the functions of dendritic cells, macrophages, and T and B lymphocytes”

(5) Selenium - Preferred form is methionine in capsules “An essential Micronutrient that affects various aspects of human health, including optimal immune responses.” (6)

**Iodine** – Preferred forms as elemental diatomic or/and ionic monoatomic

“A Micronutrient that also is known to have broad antiviral properties. These effects are mechanistically similar in principle to iodine’s antibacterial activity.” (7)

**Folic acid** – Preferred form as Methyl folate

“A Micronutrient, when deficient alters the immune system’s functions and could lead to decreased resistance to infections, as commonly observed in folate-deficient humans and animals.” (8)

Copper – Preferred form is Bisglycinate

“A micronutrient, when deficient, impairs the immune function and may be highly correlated with an increased incidence of infection and higher mortality rates observed in copper-deficient animals.” (9)

**Vitamin E** – Preferred form is all eight kinds of Tocopherol

“A micronutrient that in many studies provided evidence that the immunostimulatory effects of vitamin E confer improved resistance to infections” (10)

## EXTRAS:

**\*Glutathione** – Preferred form as precursor N-acetyl-Cysteine or straight as Glutathione in capsules or liposomal form

“Two randomized placebo-controlled trials have shown that treatment of HIV-infected patients with N-acetylcysteine caused in both cases a significant increase in all immunological functions under test” (11) Oregano oil – Taken as an extract in its natural form

“People have traditionally used oil of oregano for respiratory health. It’s also become a popular alternative remedy for cold and flu symptoms.” (12)

**Olive leaf extract** – Taken as capsules or as liquid in its natural form “An Herb that has antiviral properties due to the prevention of virus entry into the cells. It also demonstrated inhibitory properties against fungi” (13)

**\*Quercetin** – From whole food source or/with dihydrate form “A polyphenol derived from plants, Quercetin has a wide range of biological actions including anti-carcinogenic, anti-inflammatory and antiviral properties” (14)

**Melatonin** – Best taken as capsules, tablets or liposomal form “This is a hormone that modulates a wide range of physiological functions with pleiotropic effects on the immune system.” (15)

**Samento (cat’s claw)** – Best taken as an extract in its natural form

“The antiviral and immunomodulating in vitro effects from Samento oxindole alkaloids displayed novel properties regarding therapeutic procedures in Dengue Fever and might be further investigated as a promising candidate for clinical application.” (16) Liquorice root – Best taken as an extract in its natural form

“This is an herb of which the antiviral and antimicrobial activities have been most commonly reported.” (17)

**\*Silver** – Best taken in Colloidal over nanoparticles “Recent studies have identified the broad-spectrum antiviral properties of silver nanoparticles against respiratory pathogens, such as adenovirus, parainfluenza, and influenza” (18)

**Chaga** – Best taken naturally, powder or extract “This is a Mushroom that is well known for its antimicrobial, antiviral and antitumor properties. Therefore, scientific research regarding the effects of Chagas has been centred around its common folk uses. (19)

**Pau d’arco** – Taken in its natural form or/as a hot beverage “This is a Bark that contains chemical compounds called naphthoquinones, specifically lapachol and beta-lapachone. They seem to have antifungal, antiviral, and antibacterial properties. They also contain significant amounts of the antioxidant quercetin.” (20)

Now that you’ve taken some time learning about these nutrients, take some action and go acquire some. Do it now while the idea is hot and the emotion is strong. Viruses show no mercy to their victims, whether healthy or unhealthy, but it is the healthy victims that stand more of a fighting chance. Keep your body’s boxing gloves up and in its fighting stance. Add some of these elements to your regular everyday diet and sleep soundly at night knowing that your immune system’s sentinel is never tired and is always ready to squash any pesky viral invader with strength and fortitude.



## COLLECTION OF LINKED SOURCES:

### ESSENTIALS:

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29099763>
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Disclaimer: This document is only an extraction from other online sources about research evidence for immune strengthening and antiviral properties. The author takes no responsibility for the credibility of information extracted nor the effectiveness of the application thereof on Covid-19 or other diseases whatsoever.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Max Winter, the founder of Optiself, is an experienced Biohacker and works as a Health Optimization Coach, helping his clients to become the optimal versions of themselves. He has created this COVID-19 Document because he believes that there are many things that one can do with their immune system and biology in terms of health optimization. By building a solid foundation with micronutrients to keep the immune system fully functioning while using other extra compounds to boost the body and naturally repel viruses and other pathogens, we're engaging in something that our biology has been doing for a very long time. There is an innate intelligence in nature and in ourselves that also needs to be taken into consideration. Let's start to listen to what our body already knows and what our minds have forgotten.

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***“The first and best victory is to conquer self. To be conquered by self is, of all things, the most shameful and vile.” - Plato***

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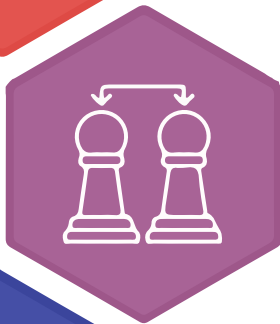
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**FITNESS**

***“When you compete against everyone else, no one wants to help you. But when you compete against yourself, everyone wants to help you.”  
Simon Sinek***



## COLD RUN THERAPY: HOW TO USE THE COLD WEATHER TO YOUR BODY'S ADVANTAGE

The Cold, given its potential to strengthen the immune system, boost fat burning, shield the nerves, improve sleep quality, reduce pain, regulate blood sugar levels and much more, is the loving friend that we all need now in our lives. These times require a strong immune system, which made me think of an old hobby of mine: “cold running”. In this article I share a memorable cold running story of mine and tell you about three different Nobel Prize winning methods I use everyday to make myself stronger against diseases. This story took place three years ago on the Finnish Independence Day.

Finland, a nation of 100 years. Today is a day of celebration and it seems that nature shows its best as well. The whole month of November was grey and the beginning of December provided depressing darkness but today there is no escaping from the sun shine. The rays are shining from a blue sky and the motionless surface of the lake complements the view to further please the eye and the mind. Today, there is no need for light therapy lamps to wake up! The swans are flying in a V-formation. A single, little bird is chirping in the snowy forest. I feel like I am in Narnia or some other magical place. First, I look for the swans and then for myself: I find myself on the surface

of the water. It is below zero degree centigrades, and against any norm, I am wearing only a t-shirt and shorts but WOW - it has been a while since I felt so ALIVE! I am with a friend, just as crazy as I am, and we have been going on for more than an hour while enjoying fully the limited supply of vitamin D while providing a proper challenge for our cardiovascular system. According to current information, we are fighting against the formation of cancer cells through stress proteins, also called heat-shock proteins (cf. Hsf1). The stimuli in our bodies are partly due to running and partly due to the exposure to the cold. The term 'cold running' (ie. running in the cold without proper clothing) is not very popular yet, but this is what the term denotes.

We started our journey from my home at 11:45 am, fueled only by some coffee, polyporus tea and raw chocolate as nourishment before heading out. There's not a huge spike in our blood sugar levels and we still enjoyed the autophagy ("self-devouring"; regulated mechanism of the cell that removes unnecessary or dysfunctional components) going on inside our cells. By the way, the award of the 2016 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine went to a Japanese autophagy researcher Yoshinori Ohsumi.

The first steps in the crispy, cold air come as a mild shock but from experience I know that right before the first kilometre the suffering transforms into a feeling of being invincible. Coldness turns into coolness and the body figures out that today is not the easy way out from this and starts producing heat. I have hardly been running during the summer and my BMI indicates that I am slightly overweight, but now my step is springy and I am not even exhausted. This takes us to the second Nobel Prize winning method and it is as simple as nasal breathing. The vasodilator gas, nitric oxide (NO) is produced in the paranasal sinuses and is excreted continuously into the nasal airways of humans. This NO will normally reach the lungs with inspiration, especially during nasal breathing and it protects the heart, stimulates the

brain, kills bacteria, and more. It is the main weapon for me against inflammation via increased blood flow. When NO is produced in the white blood cells (such as macrophages), huge quantities are created and become toxic to invading bacteria and parasites. Before you call me crazy, check out who received the 1998 Nobel Prize in physiology and medicine.

The body gets an amazing stimulus from the cold air so that my mind can also concentrate on the essential: the company and the view that a 100-year-old Finland can surely provide. The first people we encounter after a few kilometres of running reveal that our shenanigans are not considered normal by the other people. At that moment I can't fathom that kind of thinking as my pineal gland has begun to produce huge amounts of 'happy hormones' and I am feeling almost immortal. We say that we live in the north but how many of us really expose ourselves to the northern conditions? We have a steady 21 degree centigrades in our houses and when we need to leave the house we put on puffy jackets and walk straight into our heated car to take ourselves to our destination. Sound familiar? How should our bodies know that we live in the north? There is no built-in GPS in our body.

"Put some clothes on, for heaven's sake! You'll catch a cold!" ... "Don't you think that you are a little underdressed for this weather?" We've all heard these remarks from some family members. Ninety percent of the passers-by had these or similar remarks about our clothing but I didn't heed their advice. My friend cleverly always retorted to them "As long as you stay moving, there's no danger". We know that these comments come from a good place, but sometimes to grow, you have to challenge yourself. Everybody knows that one person who catches a cold very easily. Have you noticed how they always dress so warm and even wear woolly socks in the bed during summer? In theory, they live in a "southern" climate and they catch a cold because of that! To them, our cold running trip could be fatal. I can't even remember the last time I caught a cold or I was down with a fever because



my body is truly acclimated to the cold. I have been taking fairly regularly dips in a hole in the ice or in cold plunge pools for nearly a decade. I can stay in 6 degree centigrade water (42.8 Fahrenheit) for 21 minutes. Water conducts heat (or cold in this case) four times faster than air due to the molecule density of water. So, I have been training my cold tolerance and my body's thermogenic ability quite a bit. And it's easy! Just expose yourself to cold in increasing amounts. A good example of people who have a good tolerance of cold are the homeless; usually alcohol-ridden people who have spent their days and nights all year round outside exposed to the weather conditions. Their blood circulation on the surface of the skin is boosted thanks to the survival mechanisms of the body and alcohol. There is some evidence that alcoholics have greater amounts of brown adipose tissue (BAT), which can produce heat without vibrating (cf. muscle). BAT is extremely good for your body: it burns calories while you are exposed to the cold! BAT can also be found in animals that hibernate.

Now our journey is nearing a half-way mark as we spot my parents' holiday home; a typical Finnish summer cottage. We had decided in advance to take a dip in a hole in the ice when we arrive. When we reach the cottage, the mood is elevated and I am even sweating; mostly on my back, as the cold air cannot reach there so easily. We run into the ice water almost immediately, as this something new for the both of us, combining cold running into a dip into the icy water. We are hoping that the generated heat from the run will help us in our experience. And it did exactly that! We didn't stay very long in the water and didn't experience any shock from the frigid pool. The actual process was a relatively easy new feature for us. We dried ourselves and then I noticed that the heat escaped from the extremities to secure the function of core organs. This is a completely normal process when your body fights against the cold exposure. We continue our trip back to my place. The first kilometre running back feels similar to the beginning of our journey but then the warmth

spreads across my body and my mind – I feel so euphoric that the colours intensify and I feel every ray of light to caress my exposed body that has been energized by the cold and the sun. At this point, we get excited to take photos of the scenery, perhaps to prolong the unique experience of being part of the northern nature. I think out loud, “The human body is so amazing, so adaptable!” My friend, who has been able to stay over half an hour in a cold plunge pool, replies “The body is as amazing as it wants to be, it only needs challenges”. Both of us give a little smile and it feels as if we were the first people to invent an aeroplane while everybody else is warning that we'll end up as flat as pancakes. No way, we're flying.

We reached my house after a two and half hours journey and we put the kettle on. We cycle through the photos that we took during the trip as we ease into a chair. It's only after the warmth of the tea and house that we notice our bodies are really tired and weary. It was like the warm tea had given permission to our bodies, saying, “no worries, old buddy. It's my turn to keep you warm again”. I buried myself under a blanket and I felt my body screaming for fuel. I burned twice the amount of calories on that trip. I just had two sandwiches and at 2 pm, I am ready for a nap. “Flying” requires much more fuel than driving a car.

So, that is one of my favourite wintertime hobbies still today, however nowadays I have added another Nobel Prize winning technique into my repertoire: The Wim Hof Method (WHM for short). Now the method itself didn't win the prize but it uses the same complex cascade of processes involved. If you want to dive into the scientific papers behind it, Google 'Nobel Prize 2019' or 'hormetic hypoxia'. In a nutshell, with the breathing exercises you vary your oxygen levels and once you reach hypoxia (low levels of O<sub>2</sub>), your kidneys start producing erythropoietin (EPO). EPO itself increases the production of oxygen-carrying red blood cells. In turn, increased levels of red blood cells affect O<sub>2</sub> availability in the body because red blood cells are responsible for the transport of O<sub>2</sub> from the lungs to all body tissues. (This is also why some endurance athletes use

EPO for doping— it increases their supply of oxygen-carrying red blood cells). Now I ask you, can you see the way this could be possibly helpful to all of us?

The smartest doctor in the room is always your body and the best way to dive into your own physiology is the Wim Hof Method which consists of cold exposure and breathing exercises. It lets you hear the softest whispers your body is trying to tell you before they turn into loud and painful cries. During the breathing exercises the heightened oxygen levels hold a treasure trove of benefits: more energy, reduced stress levels, and an augmented immune response that swiftly deals with pathogens. The technique can be found easily on Google or on YouTube. Another reason to love this – it's free!

The 2014 Radboud study showed that WHM practice upregulates your immunity by increasing the production of white blood cells and B-lymphocytes. These are the little critters that protect you from foreign marauders such as

viruses. WHM practice won't keep COVID-19 from invading your body, but a strengthened immune system means a bigger arsenal to combat the infection, and therefore fewer and less severe symptoms.

Now, if you're not feeling too well, and you're looking to use the Wim Hof Method to fight off the infection, do not do the cold training parts of the method. When you're sick, your immune system has its hands full just fighting off the virus. If you then expose yourself to the cold, you add another stressor, forcing the immune system to divide its capacity and fight a war on two fronts. We all know how that worked out in the past.

-Joonas Jaatinen, D.N

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Joonas' interest in biohacking rose when he was in his teens and went to study evidence based medicine for 4 years. Specialized in musculoskeletal problems, he has had his own clinic since 2014, but is still studying everyday.

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## BIO- HACK: OIL CLEANSING METHOD - HOW TO FACE THE FACTS

Wait wait wait; Oil and cleanse in the same sentence? Am I reading that right? How is oil supposed to cleanse my face? I know what you're thinking, 'I've tried everything to help clear up my skin ranging from harsh chemicals to antibiotics. And now you want me to try oil?' Well this article is here to address these questions and provide you with a full in-depth intro into this natural face-cleanser that is taking the acne, eczema, and general skin-care world by storm.

And what better time to try something new? Most of us are spending most of our time in our homes due to COVID-19. Sometimes the best time to try something new is when you don't have an audience to pester you everyday.

*What is the Oil Cleansing Method and how does it work?*

The Oil Cleansing Method (OCM) is a topical type of treatment that helps to combat acne and other facial detriments to the skin. You can make the treatment yourself at home with just a couple of oils. It works by pulling the oil that your skin naturally produces, called sebum, out of your pores and leaving your skin feeling smooth and hydrated. Sebum is the leading cause of acne, due to its tendency to get stuck below the skin in your pores, attracting bad bacteria that your immune system responds to by becoming inflamed and creating a pimple around the infected area.

By rubbing natural, cold-pressed oils onto your skin, (such as castor, almond, jojoba, grapeseed, or olive oil

to name a few of the most common) you are drawing out the excess sebum by dissolving it with the rubbing oils.

The science behind it is actually quite simple. It goes back to a basic rule of chemistry in relation to solvents. The short-hand rule is that 'like dissolves like'. More scientifically speaking, polar substances tend to dissolve other polar substances (think about water, H<sub>2</sub>O and salt, NaCl) and nonpolar substances tend to dissolve other nonpolar substances (think about sebum and other oils). Because Sebum and natural oils have a very similar chemical structure, they mix together quite easily, making it just about perfect for removing all the bacteria, dirt, makeup and everything else sebum traps under your skin.

*What oils are best for this method?*

It depends on what skin type you have; oily, dry, or a mix. As a biohacker myself, I gave this OCM a try a few weeks ago. I still do it every night and my skin has never been clearer; but I have made a few adjustments since I first began. When I first started, I used olive oil as my carrier oil (carrier here refers to its ability to soften up the thicker, antibacterial oil, in this case, castor oil) and it seemed to work for a couple of days, but then I found my breakouts increasing.

After a bit more research I found that olive oil, although effective for some, is largely problematic for a majority of people. I then made the switch to sweet almond oil, which is great for hydrating the skin too. Since then, my skin has become much clearer and smoother. I highly recommend using castor oil if you have acne-prone skin, as it is rated as one of the best oils for combating acne. You may have to experiment a bit with some different oils until you find the one your face likes best.

Also, do an initial test on a small patch of skin to check for possible allergies before rubbing it all over your face. Most people aren't allergic but better safe than sorry. My mix involves about 20% castor oil and 80% sweet almond oil but you can use a wide variety of oils and research them further to see what might work best for you. I've listed some common ones below for each skin type:

**Oily - Grapeseed, pumpkin seed, sunflower**

**Acne-prone - Jojoba, hemp, castor oil**

**Sensitive - Camellia (for inflamed skin)**

**Dry - Avocado, extra virgin olive oil, almond**

*How do you do this OCM?*

It's a simple process that takes less than 10 minutes.

First, wash your hands with soap and water. After drying them, pour a small amount of castor oil into the palm of your hand. Now pour a larger amount of your carrier oil into the same palm. Rub your hands together and mix the oils. Now, with a dry face, rub the oils all over, concentrating more on irritated or inflamed areas of the skin. Rub gently for at least a couple of minutes.

Second, take a soft washcloth, preferably cotton or microfiber, and hold it under hot water until its wet and steamy. Now wring it out and then hold the cloth on each side of your face for at least 30 seconds or until you feel the cloth starting to cool. This opens up the pores of your skin allowing the oil to penetrate deep into the layer of the skin where that nasty sebum is hiding. Now, hold the cloth under hot water once more and after wringing it out, very softly wipe your face from the top down, gently soaking up any excess oil. Be sure to wash the cloth with soap and water to get all that oil off before using it for your next cleanse.

Lastly, if your skin is fairly dry, use a non-comedogenic moisturizer to add some moisture to your skin after the cleanse. Depending on the types of oil your using, you shouldn't really have to add a moisturizer to your skin after the cleanse but for peace of mind, it can't hurt to rub on a little a few minutes afterwards.

And that's it! You're done! I usually do this at night to take off all that dirt and oil that's accumulated during the day. Also, sleep is when the body rests and heals, so it seems ideal to do this right before bed.

*When will I see results?*

I can't speak for everyone but I saw results in two days. Not perfectly clear but much better than before. After a week, it was easy to see that my skin was much healthier and the breakouts had all but disappeared. From what I've read and researched, most people see results in a week's time or less. And those that had more severe skin conditions saw results in weeks or a couple of months. What I have heard is that when people stop doing the OCM or switch to other harsh chemical cleansers, their skin relapses and begins to breakout

again; so, they usually jump back on board and prep their oil rubbing fingers for more cleanses. I used to find it as sort of a chore, but now it's a habit I'm happy to do and actually look forward to; to the point that when I wake up in the morning, I'm already telling myself that I can't wait until bedtime just to give myself this time to treat my skin.

All in all, you have nothing to lose by trying this method. The only side effects I've been able to find include skin redness or irritation, but this seems to be very rare and is usually only if the user has an allergy to the oil being used. And plus, if there are side effects, who else is going to notice besides your fellow cat and/or dog keeping your company during the quarantine?

The oils should cost less than \$20 USD combined and it only takes 10 minutes at the most to do. It's not an artificial substance or a man-made chemical that will irritate your skin further. Its all natural, its cheap, and it could be the answer to that clear, acne-free skin you've long been looking for.

Dallas McClain  
Editor- in Chief



# IRIDOLOGY AND BIOHACKING

“The eyes are the windows to your soul....” It’s a very famous saying. The eyes are in fact a window to your DNA code as well as a good map for determining if you have any problems with your body. By Problems, I am referring to parasitic infections, heavy metal overload, microbe imbalances, lymphatic blockages and cholesterol problems.

In today’s pandemic-stricken world, we can even use the eyes to give us clues about our own immune system’s well-being and preparedness to tackle such a foe as the now infamous, COVID-19 virus.

You can see everything in the eyes, even personality characteristics determined by the fabric of one’s eye. We can even determine how quickly or how well someone will heal from a genetic flaw. Yes, I say genetic flaw because we inherit a lot of our genetic weaknesses from our parents. Things like Cystic Fibrosis, Sickle cell anemia, Marfansyndrome, Huntington’s disease and autoimmune diseases just to name just a few – are all examples of genetic inheritance; and these are probably just the tip of the Iceberg.

I’m an experienced Iridologist writing an article today to tell you that it’s possible to hack into your genetic code and cure your bloodline of these diseases with a detox using non-

pharmaceutical drugs. I use mostly supplements, herbs and diets to fix whatever problems I observe in the patients I see.

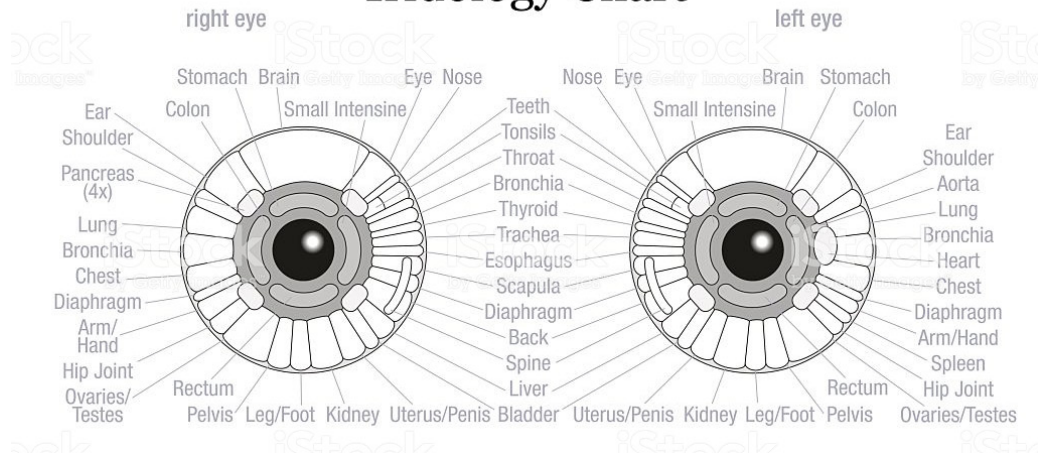
After all, most ailments are just afflictions which have been inherited by a previous generation that did not eat properly or bother to detox before considering to birth a child. The children are born with not only the father’s afflictions but also the mother’s. Let me explain: A boy who has a stagnant lymphatic system goes out one night and meets a good looking girl in a bar. They decide to start dating and unbeknownst to him, she has a microbe imbalance. After some time the two of them decide to marry and have children. The child will be born with a stagnant lymphatic system and a microbe imbalance.

Iridology is just a very deep detox, killing anything in your body that prevents you from being you. When you go for an Iridology session the Iridologist will use a special camera and take a photo of your eyes very much like the one here. With this photo they will be able to determine what needs to be detoxed out of your body without using pharmaceutical drugs.

Everything will be natural as this science is traditionally used in Ayurvedic and Traditional Chinese medicine. Both of these philosophies are all Herbal practices, not Western medicine.



# Iridology Chart



We incorporate superfoods such as Moringa, Coconut oil, fermented foods, as well as supplements and herbs, like Burdock root, Vitamin B12 and Diatomaceous Earth. We also especially focus on healing diets, as well as things like saunas, steam rooms and massage.

We go back to very ancient ways of healing before the times of Big Pharma. We do away with the mindset of just popping a pill to fix an affliction by actually digging deeper to find causes, rather than just treating symptoms. If you go to a G.P. and tell them you have a headache they will most likely just give you a pill like Paracetamol, which is a mild painkiller. However if you go to an Iridologist they will dig deeper and ask themselves, “why do you actually have the headache? And What’s causing the headache? Let’s look at that and treat that rather.”

Most people are given a very strong immune system, one that is more than capable of fighting off any serious infections

before they start to take hold. If your immune system is working properly things like the Coronavirus, Tuberculosis, Flu and Pneumonia will be destroyed long before you show any symptoms of having these diseases.

The problem however, is due to eating poorly and toxin overloads like heavy metals, fungus and microbe imbalances. This leads to our immune systems not functioning properly which leaves us open to attacks from these pathogens.

In Iridology and Natural Medicine we look to build up peoples natural immune systems by making changes to the way you eat, detoxing fungi, correcting any microbe imbalances which could’ve been caused by taking too many Antibiotics, and detoxing Heavy Metals out of your body like Mercury, Sulfur or Copper. We bring your body back into its natural state and restore the balance to make it the fighting, impenetrable machine it was meant to be.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Claire Svoboda was born and studied Sports Therapy in South Africa. She has been actively involved in Alternative healing from a very young age. Claire has worked alongside Chiropractors, Homeopaths, Herbalists and Counselors healing together as a team to help patients get back on track through an alternative treatment to Western medicine. After moving to the UK,

Claire enrolled in an Iridology and Natural Medicine Course through the School of Natural Medicine where she learned to combine her body Therapy techniques with Natural Medicine. Her approach to healing is a holistic approach where she aims to find and deal with causes rather than symptoms.

Website: [www.naturalmedicine.london](http://www.naturalmedicine.london)



*“Be fearful that in a month’s time, you will be in exactly the same place that you are right now.”*

*- Steve Sims*



# COVID, CHRONIC DISEASE AND HERBS

We live in a high tech world and yet every year more and more people suffer from chronic and infectious diseases. Now, the strange virus known as Covid -19 has literally changed all our lives – and is especially affecting those who have chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension and obesity.

Have you wondered why chronic disease is so common – and whether it is avoidable? As a herbalist, I know the power of plant medicine to restore and protect the body – a power that has been proven over thousands of years and may now be more needed than ever.

Covid-19 is referred to as a virus but it is not actually a living thing. It's more like a piece of a molecule and since it cannot replicate alone it aims to get inside healthy cells in the human body and use them to multiply and infect more cells. This virus can attack organs like the kidneys, brain and lungs while also depriving the blood of essential oxygen. This happens because, once inside the respiratory system, it can travel down its many branching airways as far as the alveoli,

small air sacs which release oxygen into the bloodstream and absorb carbon dioxide.

When the virus enters the body, it is not looking for just any healthy cell but one type in particular – those that are expressing a high amount of something called ACE2 (angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 to be technical). We've all seen the diagram of the virus with its little 'arms' and when those arms find high ACE2 cells, they dock on and start their work. Let's understand better what's going on from a recent letter to The Lancet magazine written by distinguished medical experts:

*What type of cells become high in ACE2?*

Those in the lung, intestine, kidney, and blood vessels.

*Who tends to have high ACE2 cells?*

People who suffer from diabetes, hypertension and metabolic disease

*What do doctors give patients who have these problems?*

ACE inhibitors and ARBs

*What effect do these drugs have on the body?*

They actually increase the amount of ACE2 expressed by cells, making the person even more susceptible to Covid-19 virus and less able to fight it off. So both chronic disease and the conventional treatment for it may be putting people in danger from this strange new virus. It seems that we need to go back to examine the cause of chronic disease and how it can be addressed.

That's simple – the cause is Inflammation - and inflammation is the immune system's biological response to aging, stress, a poor diet high in processed food and sugar, excessive alcohol, lack of exercise, obesity and other medical conditions.

In the thinking of traditional Chinese medicine, this inflammation creates a propensity for heat within the body – and heat can lead to a stagnation of body fluids, especially blood stagnation. There is a whole range of herbs that can efficiently clear this heat and stagnation, without unpleasant or dangerous side effects – and many of them are in our Resist herbal formula.

When it comes to recovery from covid type symptoms, I keep seeing how good our Expert Herbalist Cough formula is for nourishing, protecting and restoring the lungs. It is full of antibacterial and antiviral herbs that particularly nourish lungs, stop spasm and clear phlegm.

For maintaining good health, of course we need to address all the lifestyle causes of inflammation. Meanwhile to help strengthen and protect the immune system, Expert Herbalist Resist herbal formula can be taken long term at a maintenance dose. Also very important is Vitamin D3, along with food-state Vitamin C. Those with low levels of vitamin D have been seen to be more susceptible to covid. Elderberry is useful, too, as it helps prevent the virus from attaching to the lung by coating the alveoli receptors.

We are working on new formulas all the time, so be on the lookout for additions to our range and feel free to get in touch if you need specific health advice. Meanwhile, to learn more about herbs and good health, download our free e-book, 'Herbs and the Human Body'. Live well, love well, stay well.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Traditional Chinese Medicine expert and Osteopath, Matt Jackson has launched the UK's first range of Chinese herbal formulations for modern health problems.

The Expert Herbalist range harnesses the ancient wisdom of the East, where herbal medicine has been used for centuries to heal the body and promote a healthy long life.

Matt comes from a medical family but felt drawn to a more natural approach to health and optimal wellness. His studies have taken him to the Himalayas where he began a 4-year monastic training and China, where he studied herbal medicine and acupuncture, working in hospitals alongside leading Chinese doctors. In the UK, Matt studied at the London School of Oriental Medicine and the London School of Osteopathy.

It was during his studies in the Far East that Matt saw the role of herbal medicine in the everyday health and wellness of people. He saw that using herbal remedies was powerful and effective without the side-effects of many modern drugs.

Matt has created the Expert Herbalist range to offer people the benefits of herbal medicine in a way that is convenient and easy to use. He has created combinations of herbs that work synergistically and are safe for regular use.

The Expert Herbalist range is the result of Matt's 25 year's experience and he is passionate about helping people to have access to these powerful herbal remedies so they can live a happier, healthier long life.

Matthew Jackson Somerset Health Practice

Website: [ExpertHerbalist.co.uk](https://www.expertherbalist.co.uk)

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## BIOHACKERS PANTRY: COMMUNITY KITCHEN IN TIMES OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

I am writing this article while sitting on the steps of our ancestral home in a small village in Gujarat, India, where my family and I have resided for the last 3 months during the Covid 19 epidemic. This is a far cry from my usual lifestyle in London where I was born and raised. Although I have been living on and off in India for the last 10 years, I grew accustomed to the city life of Mumbai and Delhi with all conveniences at hand.

When the Covid 19 pandemic hit India, my husband and I decided the best place for our family was in our ancestral home in the village. Giving up modernity and luxuries we packed our bags and headed to Gujarat before the borders were sealed and social distancing became the norm for the foreseen future. For me the village offered safety, freedom for my kids to run around, plentiful local produce and most of all, a sense of community.

Our ancestral home is usually empty in the summer months and this was the first time I would open the doors of this grand house and be the head of the kitchen. With my boys' healthy appetites, my first call of action was to stock the kitchen pantry with staples to see us through at least a few months. Unlike the city this wasn't a simple trip to the supermarket to fill my trolley with easy to cook ingredients. Everything was locally sourced, mostly seasonal or in whole grain form and there was no processed foods, which was actually a bonus! Although it is far more laborious making meals in the village, what else was there to do except embrace the experience and enjoy the traditional preparations of wholesome meals. What I had always believed in theory, about sticking to the ancestral diet and lifestyle, not only proved to be true for our health but also to our pockets.

I don't expect everyone to hide away in a remote village during these times but I do believe that anyone can adopt the principles I have learned whilst being here. Let me share with you, not only how to biohack your pantry for optimal health but also save you trips to the supermarket in times of social distancing. Soon enough the world will start to open up again but it is important we continue some of the lessons we have learned during this time.

How do we move on from here and still stay safe?

### **Keep an abundance mind-frame.**

Just because there are no big supermarkets or a huge variety of international products available here in the village there is definitely no lack of food. In fact what is available is plant based, highly nutritious, local, seasonal and unprocessed other than ground or dried. This is what we should be opting for, to build optimal health and strong immunity. We should not act like there is a shortage of food but instead keep an abundance mindset knowing that there is plenty to go round. As soon as news of Covid 19 took over our lives, there was a huge surge of panic buying and hoarding, leaving the supermarket shelves bare. We went back to our hunter gatherer instincts and the only thing that was in our control was to stay safely sheltered away from risk and make sure we had enough food to survive. But what will really get you through this difficult time?

### **Sharing food and being charitable.**

On the first day we arrived in the village it was 6pm, the house still needed a good clean and the kitchen was not up and running. I hadn't brought much more than some instant noodles for the kids and some biscuits with me. However, come dinner time, to my surprise, a kind neighbor, hearing of our arrival, brought over our first meal and some homemade snacks. Another brought over onions, tomatoes and pearl millet from their farm. The local Miller sent over Whole-wheat flour and Maize. I was overwhelmed and humbled with their generosity and soon enough others turned up with various vegetables and fruits from their farms.

This would probably not have happened in the city. For me it was this sense of community and rallying round to support each other that showed me the importance of charity. When you do go to the supermarket, try to contribute a few items to charity for those in need. When you are clearing out your kitchen cupboards and find tins or packets of food that you might not use, donate them. If anything I believe we have learned how important a sense of community is through all this. Even when this is all behind us, let us not forget the importance and impact of giving.

### **How to shop and save money**

Limit exposure by avoiding too many trips to the supermarket while saving money. Keep 14 days worth of food to limit trips to the supermarket and in case you fall ill or can't get out for a while. Before the pandemic started the average person went to the supermarket 1.6 times a week and they spent on average 45 minutes each time, reports Statista. Add to that online shopping or local shops and markets and it adds up to a lot of time and money. The multitude of items available to us in the average supermarket is 39,005, according to FMI.org. Then came self isolation, and those trips to the supermarket were only made out of necessity.

Going to the supermarket became high risk not to mention the time queuing. It was easy to see that in the past we were shopping more out of habit, buying into marketing tactics and overbuying products that no longer benefit our lifestyle. Many took to growing their own vegetables at home. I would recommend ordering online and supporting local small businesses by getting milk delivered from a local dairy, fruit and veg boxes delivered by local producers, etc. Social distancing doesn't mean we still can't have be there for each other in other ways.

### **Mindful not wasteful.**

Nothing grown and consumed in the villages goes to waste. Here there was a food waste system in place way before coloured bins arrived in the Western world. All households are predominantly vegetarian so all food waste is organic. Whatever is not consumed is given to the cows except onion



peelings - they don't like those! Food that is still consumable but in excess is either up-cycled into other dishes or offered to those who may not have enough to eat. Whether it is a bowl of rice, a few chapatti or some vegetables, they are always gratefully received by someone in need.

Payment for small jobs is often given in grains or produce from their farms instead of money. Even the miller takes payment in grains for those who bring their harvest to be milled. He then sells the flour to others and makes his money that way. Be mindful of food waste and if you have made extra on occasion then maybe offer to a friend or neighbor who would appreciate the gesture.

### **Planning meals**

Take stock of what you already have in your pantry cupboards and refrigerator. Fruit and vegetables that I wasn't going to use before they spoiled I chopped up and put in freezer bags for later use. We often buy way more than we need, hoard it or throw it away. I would recommend trying it out for yourself. Use everything you already have in the house before you go shopping. This way you rotate products that may never see the light beyond the cupboard doors. Be more adventurous with the ingredients at hand and substitute ingredients that are not available. Get creative!

Buy multi purpose ingredients, ones you can use to create more than one meal. Plan meals and shopping lists of necessities to avoid unnecessary items and overspending, especially with fresh produce.

*What does your body need rather than what your taste buds want?* Choose ingredients that have high nutritional value, vitamin, minerals and antioxidants to boost immunity. It is far easier for me to do that here than in the city because of all the temptation of snacks and fast food options that comes with city-life. But since going out to eat or even ordering in became a risk, everyone got back to home cooked meals and were probably a lot healthier for it; I know I was.

At first I was in despair at not being able to order my favorite take out, but eventually once my body got all the nutrients it needed from the wholesome foods I cooked at home, my health improved and the cravings disappeared. Select the freshest produce with the longest shelf life and choose whole grains instead of refined and processed foods. Pulses and legumes will give you the protein you need plus essential nutrients with a long shelf life.

Use spices and herbs for flavour and micronutrients. To boost my family's immune system or cure the most common ailments from colds, coughs and even cuts, I turn to my spice cupboard. These have to be on the essentials list not just for flavour but for optimal health. I noticed in all the time I have been here that people very rarely get sick and they rarely go to the GP or hospital. They go to the local Vaid (Ayurvedic Practitioner) who learned the science of ayurveda from his forefathers. His methods of healing and future prevention of ailments is all natural and mostly plant based. What keeps them healthy is a combination of their daily routine, diet, low stress levels and a sense of community and belonging. Nobody is alone here or goes hungry and that is what keeps them living up to and beyond 100 years of age.

The lack of modern facilities and doing things the traditional way meant I did not have a microwave, oven, toaster, kettle, food processor or electric whisk! - All things that most regard as kitchen must-haves in Urban homes. For the last 3 months non stick pans were out and traditional pots and pans came back into use. I can tell you, hand on my heart, that I have not missed a single one. I learned to turn my pressure cooker into an oven, I made tea the Indian way on the stove and I am in love with the old durable cookware that has lasted since the 1950's.

Not only are there no toxins leaching into our food anymore, but I am fortifying my food with trace minerals from the cookware, such as iron and earth minerals from clay. Why not give your cookware a check and get rid of anything that may be toxic such as aluminum or scratched non stick pans. Replace them with cast iron, ceramic or stainless steel.



### **Keep a well stocked pantry**

Stock up on staples like whole grains, beans and lentils. These will provide you with a good source of carbohydrates, protein and essential nutrients. Try to stick to ones that are from your ancestral diet or are local for the most benefits. Try and find local ethnic stores as the products may be cheaper and in bigger packs.

A little tip; before storing grains and legumes, run a few drops of oil such as sunflower through them to preserve shelf life and avoid pests. Rinse thoroughly before use and always pre-soak legumes before cooking.

### **Ancestral diet**

Our eating habits have changed drastically in only a generation or two, as have the health risks we face because of them. Think back to your childhood or your grandma's kitchen and the food memories and flavours it evokes. I'm pretty sure nothing you have eaten this week could be recalled with as much fondness. I know I have rediscovered

ingredients and recipes that my ancestors prepared here in the village and tasted food they would have enjoyed.

My daily routine here is probably not so far removed from hers: rising early, doing the chores, cooking for my family and chatting on the steps of our home to the neighbors in the evening before retiring to sleep under the ceiling fan. Our ancestors held on to tradition, and no matter where in the world they lived, they were reluctant to change and for good reason too. They had simple and nutritious diets that kept them healthy and strong till old age. The more ancient the diet, the better it is for you. The benefits of the ancestral diet have been extensively researched by Steven Le's and documented in his book, '100 Million Years of Food: What Our Ancestors Ate and Why It Matters Today.' Science aside, ancestral eating habits cut down on ingredients and decision making. Most traditional eating habits rotate foods and are seasonal rather than too much variety. I am sure a relative would be absolutely thrilled to share some recipes.

## My Pantry

These ingredients work for me and mine, so please feel free to use them as a guide. My Pantry is predominantly influenced by my ancestral diet, but most of these ingredients are versatile in creating flavours from all over the world. If you trace back your ancestral diet as far back as you can, it won't differ too much from one person to the next. Most of it is found in nature and unprocessed, only the flavour profile and regional varieties may differ.

Food Group	Ancestral Ingredients	My Star ingredient
Grains	Basmati rice Local short grain rice Rice flour Beaten rice (Poha) Semolina Cracked Bulger wheat Whole wheat flour Oats Cornmeal Barley	Rice contains an essential amino acid called lysine which is essential to the HGH (human growth hormone) that helps our bodies repair and grow. promotes digestion and gut flora, anti-aging properties and breaks down fat. Also allows for better absorption of vitamin D and calcium.
Millet & Pseudo-grains	Amaranth Pearl millet Finger millet Buckwheat Sorghum	Amaranth is an ancient grain and is rich in fiber, protein and is gluten free. A good source of manganese, magnesium, phosphorus and iron. Improves brain function and strengthens bones.  High in phenolic acids that act as an antioxidant. Regulates cholesterol and insulin production.
Legumes Beans Lentils	Chickpeas white and black variety Split Chickpeas (Chana Dal) Chickpea flour (Gram flour/Besan) Kidney beans Black Gram (Urid) whole/split Mung whole/split Split Red Lentils (Masoor) Split Pigeon Peas (Toor) Hyacinth Beans (Vaal) Black Eyed Peas (Lobia)	Mung bean bought in any form whether fresh, dried, whole, split, husked, sprouted or ground has so many uses and benefits. It is the super legume high in protein, fiber, rich in amino acids, vitamins and minerals. sprouted mung beans also contain reduce levels of phytic acid, an anti-nutrient that reduces the absorption of minerals. antioxidants reduce risk of diabetes, heart disease, heat stroke. Aid healthy gut biome. Perfect food for stages in life.
Sweeteners	Natural cane sugar brown and white Jaggery (Gur) Raw Honey local and organic	Jaggery/ Gur is made from unrefined cane sugar and contains trace amounts of micronutrients including iron, potassium, magnesium, and B-vitamins. Jaggery is great for digestion and many more health benefits.
Nuts seeds	Almonds Cashews Peanuts Pistachios Walnuts Sunflower seeds Sesame seeds (unhulled) Flax seeds Melon seeds Poppy seeds	Sesame seeds  Contain a lot of Lignins, which act as an antioxidant and gets converted by your gut into another lignin called enterolactone. Enterolactone act similar to sex hormone estrogen and may help in the prevention of breast cancer and early menopause. Great source of non-dairy calcium, bone health, lowers cholesterol and triglycerides for better heart health. Source of B vitamins.



Food Group	Ancestral Ingredients	My Star Ingredient
Spices	Turmeric Red Chillies dry whole/ ground Cumin seeds Coriander seeds Black Mustard seeds Fenugreek seeds Fenugreek leaves dried Fennel seeds Carom/ Bishops weed seed (Ajwain) Himalayan Salt Black Pepper White Pepper Mace Nutmeg Cinnamon Cloves Asafoetida Curry Leaves (dried) Fenugreek leaves (dried) Saffron Cardamom green Black Cardamom Tej Patta Indian Bay/Cinnamon leaves Garcinia indica (Kokum) Tamarind Star Anise Aniseed Garam masala (own blend) Chai masala (own blend) Ground Ginger	<p>Individually Black Pepper &amp; Turmeric have huge benefits to health, but as a duo they amplify benefits by 2000%.</p> <p>Together they improve digestion, immunity, kidney and liver function, skin, teeth, appetite. They also help reduce weight, gas, congestion, arthritis, depression, cancer risk, inflammation, diabetes risk and probably a lot more.</p>
Fats	Ghee Coconut oil Sunflower oil Sesame oil	<p>Ghee is liquid gold and nourishes the whole body. Ghee has SCFA (short chain fatty acids) the best kind. Promoting fat burning, gut flora, healthy heart, brain function and radiant skin. Reduces the glycaemic index in foods. Regulates blood sugar levels, thyroid function.</p> <p>I make my own it is fairly easy. However, it has become more widely available globally.</p>
Miscellaneous	Pickles Indian Popadoms/Papad Vadi dried lentil cakes Homemade savouries Tea	<p>Pickles</p> <p>Whether they are Indian or not doesn't matter as long as they have gone under the fermentation and preservation process, they will aid your digestion system and allow your gut biome to flourish. they also add so much depth of flavour to a meal.</p>

## PANTRY RECIPES

### Khichadi- Indian lentil and rice dish

Everyone should have a stock cupboard recipe or two up their sleeve that is easy and nutritious for the whole family. Khichadi is that perfect meal. It has 84% more absorbable protein than chicken and rice, at a fraction of the cost. You can add a variety of vegetables and spices to liven it up too, along with the added nutritional benefits. It is the perfect food from weaning babies to wise elders. Enjoy with ghee for optimal absorption of nutrients and homemade yogurt for added probiotics.

Serves: 4

#### Ingredients

1 1/2 cup Rice  
1 1/2 cups Mung Dal/Green gram split with or without husk  
1/2 tsp Turmeric powder  
1 tsp Cumin seeds  
750ml Water  
Salt to taste

1. Ghee to serve.
2. Wash and Soak the split mung and rice in water for 1 hour; then drain.
3. Transfer to a large pot or pressure cooker and add 750ml water. Add turmeric, cumin seeds and salt. Cook on a medium heat until almost all the water is absorbed into the khichdi. Put the lid on and turn down the heat for a further 5 minutes. (If cooking in a pressure cooker, allow to cook for 10 minutes or two whistles on medium heat. Then switch off. Do not remove the lid; leave it to rest for 10 minutes). Fold in a tablespoon of ghee and serve extra on the side if needed. Note: If you prefer a looser consistency, especially for babies, then just another 200ml of water while cooking. Also experiment with different split lentils (I use Toor Dal/Pigeon Peas split or Masoor Dal/Red split lentil quite often).

### Chai Masala (Spice blend for Indian tea)

#### Ingredients

25g Cloves  
35g Cardamom pods green  
80g Black Peppercorns  
100g Ground Ginger  
60g Whole Cinnamon or 40g Ground  
1/2 Nutmeg grated

1. Place all the whole spices in a spice or coffee grinder until it's a fine powder.
2. Combine with the remaining ground spices and transfer to an airtight jar or tin.
3. You will never need to buy an expensive Chai latte again!
4. Add a pinch to your tea, or if you're like me and prefer going caffeine free (or don't drink tea), then enjoy in hot milk or even use for delicious spiced desserts as you would a pudding spice blend.

### How to make Indian tea

#### Ingredients

1 cup water  
1 cup milk  
2 tsp loose tea extracts leaves depending on strength  
1/4 tsp chai masala  
Sugar to taste

1. Optional 1/2 tsp fresh grated ginger
2. Add the water, tea leaves, sugar and spices to a pan.
3. On a medium heat, bring to a boil for 2 minutes.
4. Add milk and bring back to a boil; don't walk away, as it can boil over.
5. Once it comes to a boil lower the heat and simmer for 4 minutes.
6. Then carefully pour tea through a strainer into a pot or cups and discard the tea leaves.
7. Enjoy this warming cuppa and the amazing health benefits. It strengthens the immune system, reduces inflammation, helps blood circulation, improves metabolism, aids digestion, prevents colds and coughs, enhances one's mood and so much more.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Sonal Patel is a Chef and Wellness Educator working with families in the UK and India to build conscious cooking and lifestyle habits. After appearances on Masterchef in the UK, she journeyed to India to further explore the culinary teachings of her rich ancestry and Ayurveda. It was there where she started

Spice Chakra, a conscious food and well-being company. As a mother of two boys while living between two continents, her current focus is on biohacking for children and using food as a powerful medicine.

Facebook: [Sonal Patel](#)

Instagram: [spicechakra](#)



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# RECOVERY

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*“Just as a well-filled day brings blessed sleep, so a well-employed life brings a blessed death.”*

*– Leonardo da Vinci*

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey t-shirt, is sitting on the edge of a bed. She is smiling and looking down at an open book she is holding. A young child with dark hair is lying in the bed, looking up at the woman. The child is holding a large, light-colored stuffed animal. The room is dimly lit, with a nightstand visible in the background holding a clock and a lamp. The overall atmosphere is warm and intimate.

# A FAMILY EVENING ROUTINE FOR A RESTFUL SLEEP

We all know that sleep is pretty important. What many of us don't realize is how critical it is to our overall health and wellbeing. When we're talking about sleep we mean deep and restful, not the 'tossing and turning' kind. Sleep is critical to supporting your immune system! Studies show that not getting enough of it can leave you more vulnerable to viruses.

Lack of sleep can also affect the speed of your recovery if you do get sick! Additionally, sleep deprivation can have an effect on building immunity after being vaccinated. On top of that, a recent study conducted at University of Washington exposed that the time needed for the vaccine to do its job took 2-3 times longer in the group of the sleep-deprived subjects compared to the well-rested ones! Not getting enough quality sleep can also lead to some serious health issues including obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, just to name a few!

What about an occasional night out, you may ask. Although it's not great and you may feel tired, irritated and spaced out, a night without sleep won't seriously harm your health. What's really important is making sure you're getting enough sleep on a daily basis. Quality rest will not only help you maintain your physical and mental wellbeing but can also resolve some underlying issues that are making your life more difficult. That being said, you should treat sleep as a necessity, a base of your everyday living.

Even if you feel anxious, stressed or just not that tired, you can learn how to get a restful sleep every night. All you have to remember is that practice makes perfect, and getting your body into a routine is key with those techniques. And remember, there's no better time to start than NOW!

## **1. Find out your family's sleep requirements**

Everyone is different and so are our sleeping needs. In an ideal world, you would have the time to go to sleep and wake up

in line with your body's internal clock, without worrying about putting the alarm on. Lockdown is the ideal time to run this experiment, as we all have more time to sleep-in. All you have to do is make sure all of you go to bed and wake up at your natural times. The next day repeat that, but make sure to write down the time everyone fell asleep and woke up the next morning. That will give you an idea of how much sleep everyone requires and so you can start adjusting your evening routine to make sure you all get enough sleep.

## **2. Program your brain for sleep**

We humans like things being regular. And so your brain likes to rest at the same time every night. Once you find out how much sleep you all need you can start setting the daily routine by scheduling bedtime for all of you. It can be difficult to start with but will get easier with time once your body and mind get used to the regularity. Remember, it's not all set in stone and leave room for flexibility, as there may be days when it simply won't be possible.

## **3. Consider your productivity**

We all have different working styles and although many things can be adjusted, some just can't. If you are most productive in the early mornings and you like to get things done before the kids get up, try going to sleep an hour or two before your scheduled bedtime. This way you won't have to sacrifice your sleep for morning productivity and you won't disturb your circadian rhythm too much. If you are more productive in the evenings give yourself a deadline for going to sleep, especially if you have to get up early in the morning.

## **4 Find time to unwind**

Although resting before getting rest may sound strange to you, it will actually help you fall asleep faster. Noone's got the time to do it all but try at least some of the following:

*Relax the body*

Take a warm (not hot) bath - it will help you reach an ideal temperature for rest. Try adding a few drops of lavender essential oil for some relaxing aromatherapy.

Do yoga - Gentle stretches and asanas will help you relax the muscles. Remember to not overdo it!

Have a warm drink - Ayurveda advises warm milk with nutmeg as a natural sleep aid. You can also try a relaxing herbal tea.

*Relax the mind:*

Meditate - It will help you clear and calm the mind.

Make a to-do list for the next day - Getting it all out on paper will help your brain let go for the night. It's especially good if you're suffering from 'evening anxiety'.

Distract the mind by reading or listening to stories - It will help you fall asleep more easily and it's something you can practice with your children.

## **5. Get some herbs**

Herbs are a natural way of helping you achieve a healthy body and mind. Instead of reaching for the sleeping pills try one of the following teas next time! You can include a relaxing herbal tea in your family's daily evening routine.

The best herbs for facilitating sleep are:

**Passiflora**      **Chamomile**      **Valeriana**  
**Lemon Balm**      **Lavender**

## **6. Ditch the screens**

Don't use your smartphone for at least an hour before going to bed. The blue light emitted from screens including phones, Ipads, laptops, can delay the release of melatonin, increase alertness and disrupt your body's internal clock! Planning this evening downtime will be easier once you know your sleeping schedule. This can become the perfect time for some self-care and family time, especially if you're finding it difficult to gather everyone together regularly! You



can also use this time to take a bath, read or put your kids to bed. Not using screens can help you squeeze in some quality time with yourself and your loved ones!

### 7. Prepare the room

You now know how to prepare your mind and body for a restful sleep. What's left is getting your bedroom ready. As you're falling asleep your body temperature drops, that's why the best temperature for sleep is between 17-19 degrees! For babies and toddlers, it should be slightly higher - about 21-23 degrees. Make sure the room is dark, quiet and comfortable. Investing in a good quality mattress is always a good idea! Your bedroom should be a relaxing environment, try to keep the TV and other electronic devices out.

Now you're equipped in the necessary knowledge to approach your evening routine like a true biohacker! Remember that the key is trying out different techniques and finding what works for you. It will take some time but once you find that perfect routine for yourself and the family, your body and mind will thank you for it!

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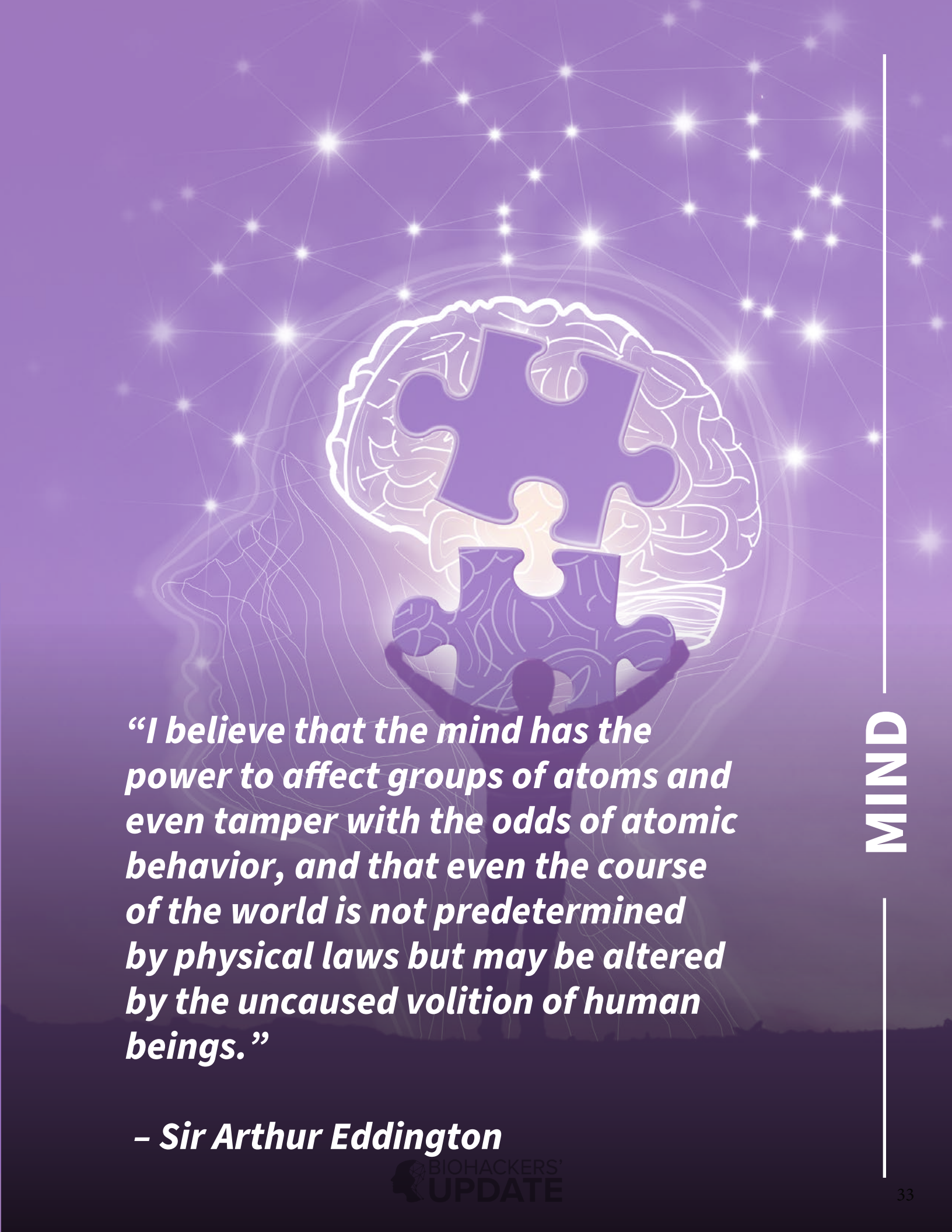
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***“I believe that the mind has the power to affect groups of atoms and even tamper with the odds of atomic behavior, and that even the course of the world is not predetermined by physical laws but may be altered by the uncaused volition of human beings.”***

***– Sir Arthur Eddington***



# NATURE'S CHILDREN: LET MOTHER NATURE TEND YOUR MIND

Our world has been turned upside down these last few months. Every nation, state, even continent is experiencing this change in differing ways. As a Natural Biohacker, my solution for sanity, never mind health, has been going outside. Thankfully here, the well worn motto of 'Stay at Home' did not always mean Stay Inside. Alas this was not understood by many, nor even possible for others.

Recently I moved to the UK. Prior, I spent the last ten years living and working in Southern Spain practicing as a psychotherapist. It was there that I developed my practice, initially inspired by Richard Louv and his book 'Last Child in the Woods'. I added what I called Nature Sense: a type of outdoor therapy. I found that when I took my practice

outside, my clients recovered much quicker. It was like their problems dissolved in an uncomplicated shift, each gaining new perspectives simply by being more connected to Nature.

In Spain I lived at the last point of Europe, where the mountains meet the sea, where the Atlantic spills into the Mediterranean and where the sun rises behind the mountains of Africa and sets on the beaches of Europe. It was magical.

I'd sit with my clients on the big sand dune, looking at the snow capped mountains of Morocco and gently say that the sand dune can't be controlled. Every grain is always moving. I'd explain that the sand blows in from Morocco and does not just land in Spain, but can also be found from the shores of Iceland across to the beaches in the Caribbean.

When we spoke about Nature, strangely instead of their presenting issue, in time my clients would find a connection and resolve for their story. They found metaphors everywhere we went. For instance experiencing the dune, with no control, they could finally begin to feel safer in a world where control is difficult. Others found different messages and we all relate to nature in our own particular way.

I recall one client specifically who had more money than he'd ever be able to spend. He came to me because he was so unhappy. It's called Paradise syndrome! I took him to a wild beach by an ancient Roman town, complete with a crumbling amphitheatre, but now only inhabited by sand voles, birds and creeping cats. On the rocks there were some even more ancient footprints - Tumbras as referred to by the locals. They were hollows made by the Phoenicians over a thousand years ago. There, in the far past they'd leave their dead, offered to the ever circling vultures that still fly above. Now much less foreboding, the Tumbras appear as gentle grooves surrounded by wild flowers and sunshine.

My client, however, felt compelled to lie in one. I just held the space. We walked back in silence. There was no need for words, it was what is known in Japanese as "Yuugen", meaning feelings too deep for words. Life for him changed after that. He traded in his Italian loafers and meticulously tailored jacket for board shorts and a campervan (albeit high end!). His grey, laptop face started to shine, well-alive and tanned. More importantly, without doubt he became much happier and it was that day where his change began.

Nature is our connection, it is our balance and remedy to the ever modern indoor life. As a natural biohacker, I have to connect with Nature every day in order to earth myself and buffer the technology - that is the reality of my world. But this does not have to be on the shores at the edge of the world. I can do this in London. We all can do this, we just

have to know how to hear the call of Nature and understand its healing language.

From the Lockdown in London I have looked to my friends in Spain and shuddered at the draconian measures put in place to curb the virus. They locked them from life, from nature, from light. I was thankful that going outside was encouraged in the UK and other countries. The extremely dangerous virus, the longer lasting illness, were both constant messages from the news that cheaply peddled fear to keep people inside lit up with the sickening blue light of their screens. People were dying unnecessarily, as the culture of the west is more focused on symptom-led treatment, not prevention.

There was almost no mention from the governments of the world about the necessity of natural Vitamin D, of supplementing with Zinc or a host of other immunity makers, or of adaptogens. Fear was wrapping the government in one direction and its people in others. Biohackers were not claiming solutions, only insights on how to reduce your risk, perhaps taking a potential hospital stay from 3 weeks, to a simple high temperature at home, if anything at all. An observation on how humanity has been dealing with viruses from the dawn of time seemed to be blocked!

The shameful situation followed where people of color with foundational jobs were dying disproportionately because no one told them that the sun needs to kiss their skin each day. The fear of offence by the grey power was over riding a biohackers fundamental arsenal.

In my world, in emotional and mental health, the reality is horrendous. People calling up their doctors and getting antidepressants for an anxiety that's trying to deliver a real and present message. If some doctors could only say one thing and tell these people who are at home for weeks on end - to go outside for a walk, breath in the trees, put your face to the sun,



sleep with the dark and rise with the light it would help so many to feel better. ITs also simple, free advice.

Over this time, I've been working on a helpline for people suffering from anxiety and I've found that even if I can get them to sit by an open window, it's helped. I was honoured to have spoken to a lady who rang, in hysterical tears, saying that she'd been inside for 6 weeks. She was just 32 and she was healthy but because she had watched the news, consistently, she feared for her life. She was lost in a cortisol crisis. Through her panic she told me that she'd been staring at a lamppost for weeks. So we talked about what else was out the window. There was also a cherry blossom, so we started to talk about that. She realised that while in lockdown, she'd watched it grow leaves and then blossom. Certainly nature does not stand still. The magic of metaphor did its work. Slowly, I got her to open her door, to step outside and walk to the tree, to touch it, to breathe it and hear the birds that could be heard with the silence of the time. All the while I stayed on the phone. She stepped back inside - she cried - but this time with joy!

We may need Zoom to connect and online apps to generate digits in our bank account. But life stops making sense when we disconnect from what's real, what nourishes our ancestral soul. Time marches on. We are all hoping a lesson has been learned. How do we let people know that we must go outside to heal inside? This will be more important when we recognise that nearly two thirds of the world's population is set to be in urban environments by 2050. Social distancing a delusion.

I propose City Hacking, some gentle ways to get Nature Sense into you, your friends and your family's life.

**1. Go somewhere blue (water) or go somewhere green (trees), or white (mountains) .** A city canal or a corner park will do as a place to start.





**2. Play 3's.** Sit quietly and hear three natural things, see three natural things and touch three natural things. Take your time.

**3. Breathe.** Find somewhere to sit - or even lie down. Practice deep belly breathing. Hold it and breathe out longer. Take a big breath and hold it for 5 seconds and then releasing it for 7 seconds. Also try to 'box breathe'. As long as you hold and release, you'll trigger your autonomic system to move from your stress side to your regenerative side - sympathetic to parasympathetic.

**4. Lean against a tree, or put your feet on the grass, or sink your hands into the earth.** This is grounding or earthing. It balances out your energy and aligns it with the planet. Reflect when the last time it was that your body touched the actual globe that we spin on. Do this often.

**5. Make a pesto!** Collect nettles (wear oven gloves!) and dump them in hot water when you get home to take out the sting. Then whizz them up with olive oil and salt and some pine nuts. Presto - you have Pesto - free food in the city!

**6. Get free therapy. Tell a tree your problem.** Let your child know it's safe to tell the tree it's biggest secret, fear or confession. It feels good. It may give them the courage to tell you. Go back to the same tree often. Tell it good stuff too. Watch how it changes in the seasons. Watch how your child grows with it.

**7. Explore gardening or if that's not cool - gerilla gardening.** Find a scrubby place and secretly do it up. Buy seeds and make your world a better place.

**8. Explore circadian living.** Get up with the light and sleep with the light. Introduce candles to evening meal time. Let the kids light them; doing 'dangerous' stuff is important.

**9. Go to a farmers market.** Don't just buy but ask about the stuff you're buying. These are people who are passionate about what they do. Buy fruit and vegetables that are weird shapes and have a little dirt on them. Support good agriculture.

10. We know the names of brands more than we do the names of trees and flowers. **Change that.**

**11. Hold meetings outside,** for your family, friends and business. Spread the awareness.

Above all, play. If you don't have children, discover the child within you. If you do this on the street, it's not so forgiving. If you do it in nature, it's rarely questioned. Why is that? It's because Nature is our Happy Place. We've just forgotten this prime truth. It is a family feeling, a wise grandparent. It's our baseline biohack that's free and makes us feel better than a pill or a static bike in a basement. Love nature and it will love us back and protect us like the child of it that we are.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Fiona Austin is a positive psychologist practicing in the UK and Spain. She takes her clients outside for walk and talk sessions, introducing individuals, families and companies to fundamental biohacking through her programme Nature Sense - Going outside to feel good Inside.

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<http://www.bmcc.biz/>



## **BIOHACK – READ EVERY DAY... AND KEEP DEMENTIA AWAY**

“Leaders are readers.” “Those who read, succeed.” Almost all of us know these common expressions but when do we ever think about the proof behind them? That would take research, and then that would mean reading. It’s one of those things that we know we should do, but just like starting a diet, going to the gym, or any other healthy habit, its not only difficult to start, but also to keep up with. But now many of us are discovering extra time on our hands on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, so in reality, now is the best time to pick

up this new habit. It will not only add immense value to our everyday life, but also help keep us from going crazy from all that time spent in lockdown.

I didn’t discover the immense value that reading carries until I was in my mid-twenties. Life before that composed a scene of a boat sailing on unpredictable currents and unconquerable winds. Reading helped bring more peace and calmness into my life, and I think it can do the same for you.

But don't just go by my opinion, after all, who am I? I know a skeptical reader when I see one. Perhaps scientific proof can help shine a light on the hidden codes these expressions are signaling. In this article, we'll cover some of the most commonly acclaimed benefits from everyday reading, all backed by research and science.

### **1. Reading increases intelligence**

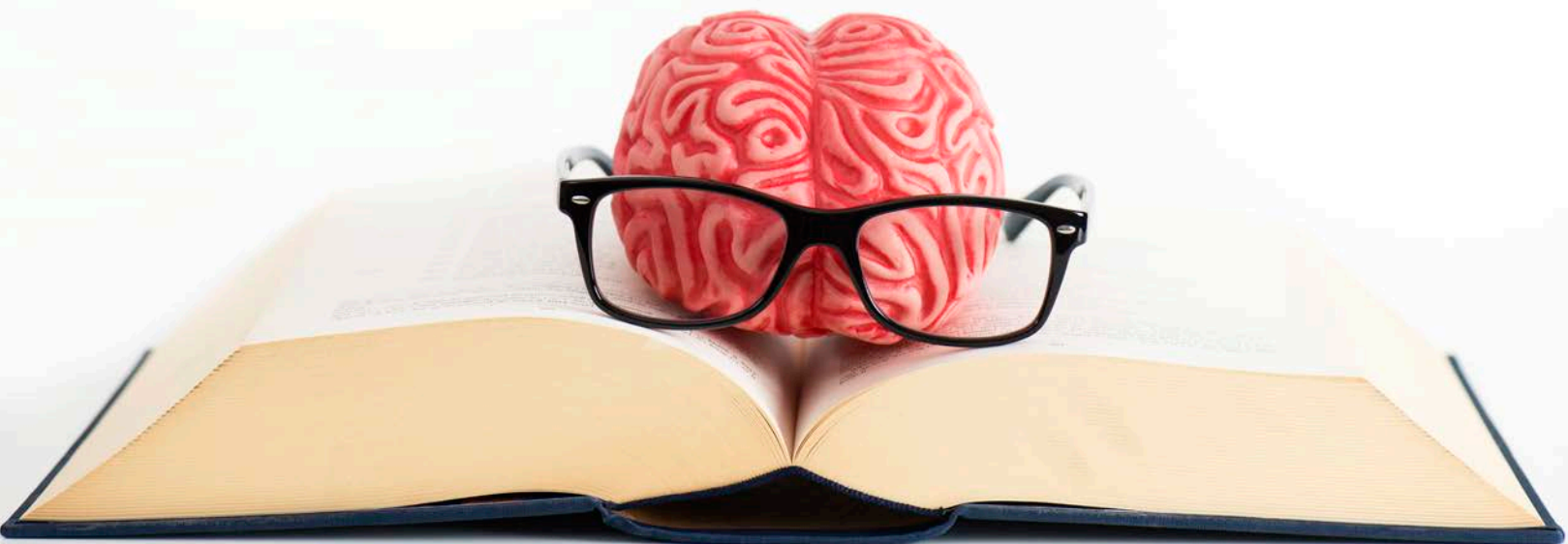
Reading has been shown as one of the best activities to increase intelligence as it exposes oneself to a wide variety of vocabulary and also implores the memory part of the brain by introducing many elements in the story for the reader to keep track of, such as events, characters, dates, etc. As children we learn at a rapid pace and soak up information like a sponge, but although the rate of learning is not as quick in adulthood, there's no reason to suggest that the learning stops there. The University of London conducted a study that tested the vocabulary skills of the same people, first at age 16, and then later at age 42. The researchers asked the participants how often they read and other simple questions about their daily habits. The younger age group average

score was 55%, while the average of the older age group was 63%, meaning that humans continue to learn language skills even as adults.

But the most interesting note here is that those participants who read frequently for pleasure scored the highest marks on the test. Adults aren't the only ones expanding their minds as they read. Children perhaps show the greatest growth in intelligence when reading. A paper published by The University of California Berkeley showed that Children's books expose children to 50% more words than prime TV or even a conversation between two college graduates. This early exposure leads to higher scores on not just reading tests, but overall intelligence tests.

### **2. Reading reduces stress**

When it comes to relaxing activities, reading tops the list. A study conducted at the University of Sussex in England found that only six minutes of reading was enough of a distraction to reduce participants' stress levels by 68 percent. Interestingly enough, reading proved to be the most successful in achieving



this relaxation effect, more than drinking a cup of tea or coffee, listening to music, or taking a walk. When we read a book, we forget about the world around us and lose ourselves in the story, allowing our worries to dissipate and letting our minds wander free and happily. The next time you're feeling stressed and wanting to pull your hair out, take a breath, light a candle, and crack open a book. It only takes a few pages and a few minutes to get you feeling well again.

### **3. Reading can make you more empathetic**

Being able to truly understand and empathize with people is an attribute that is largely valued in today's defensive and vulnerable society. Researches from the New School for Social Research in New York have concluded that reading fictional books, contributes to the enhancement of what scientists are calling, ToM, or Theory of the Mind, an ability that revolves around the understanding of others and their perspectives. "Understanding others' mental states is a crucial skill that enables the complex social relationships that characterize human societies," David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano wrote of their findings.

### **4. Reading can slow the progress (and possibly prevent) Alzheimer's and Dementia.**

Perhaps one of the most motivating reasons to read is to keep Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease at bay. Dementia is a widely used term for a decline in mental ability that is serious enough to cause disturbance with everyday life. Alzheimer's Disease is the most common form of Dementia, accounting for 60 to 80 percent of cases. Albert Einstein once said, "Once you stop learning, you start dying". Without something to stimulate our minds, our brain's power only remains stagnant or declines. A study published in the online Journal of Neurology showed that habitual mental exercise was able to lower brain decline by 32 %.

Another study conducted by Robert S. Wilson at The University Medical center in Chicago looked at a sample of 294 elderly men and women, mostly in their 80s, who were given mental and thinking exams every year in the remaining years of their lives. Its important to note that the participants also completed questionnaires stating how often they performed mentally stimulating tasks, such as reading, writing letters or visiting a library. After the participants passed away, their brains were examined by researches for any signs of Alzheimer's and Dementia. The researchers found that people who participated in mentally challenging activities most often, both early and late in life, had a slower rate of decline in memory compared to those who did not engage in such activities. "Based on this, we shouldn't underestimate the effects of everyday activities, such as reading and writing, on our children, ourselves and our parents or grandparents," said Dr. Wilson.

At this point its relevant to ask if the theory of the cognitive reserve hypothesis of mental function is more credible due to this study. This theory essentially hypothesizes that mentally challenging tasks help to maintain and build brain cells and connections between brain cells. In turn, these connections come to our assistance later in life by offsetting the damage to the brain caused by Alzheimer's and Dementia, thereby assisting with preserving the memory and thinking skills.

This isn't the only study to present this correlation. One publication from the PNAS, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, revealed that those who participate in mental exercises that highly stimulate the brain, such as reading, chess, or puzzles could be 2.5 times less likely to develop Alzheimer's than those who use their free time on less stimulating activities.



## 5. Reading can increase your lifespan

That's right. Reading can add more time onto that precious life of yours. Researchers collected data on 3,635 people over 50 years old participating in a larger health study who had answered questions about reading. After dividing the sample into three groups: those who read no books, those who read books up to three and a half hours a week, and those who read books for more than three and a half hours a week, researchers found that book readers tended to be female, college-educated and in higher income groups. Because of this, researchers controlled for those factors as well as age, race, self-reported health, depression, employment and marital status. Compared with those who did not read books, those who read for up to three and a half hours a week were 17 percent less likely to die over a 12-year follow-up period; and those who read more than that were 23 percent less likely to die. Book readers lived an average of almost two years longer than those who did not read at all.

They discovered a similar but weaker association among those who read newspapers and periodicals. Books proved to have the larger impact of one's lifespan. "People who report as little as a half-hour a day of book reading had a significant survival advantage over those who did not read," said the senior author, Becca R. Levy, a professor of epidemiology at Yale. "And the survival advantage remained after adjusting for wealth, education, cognitive ability and many other variables." So, if you want to be celebrating next New Year's Eve, set and follow the resolution of reading every day, and take comfort in the fact that the phrase, "There's always next year", will perhaps hold more truth for you.

## 6. Reading can help you sleep


Better Sleep, Better Life. Yeah, I just made that up, but tell me I'm wrong. We all feel better when we wake up refreshed from a good night's sleep. But how does reading contribute to better sleep? Well, according to the Mayo Clinic, when

we establish a bedtime ritual, such as reading a book before bed, we train the brain to wind down and prepare for bed. It's important to mention that this is only true with actual physical books, not electronic books on screens. Research has shown that e-screens and tablets can actually hurt your sleep and keep you awake longer. This is especially important in the case of children. According to a publication in *Pediatrics*, 54% of children sleep near a small screen and clock 20 fewer minutes of sleep because of it. There's something about the pages of a book that brings the body to a relaxed, restful state, in contrast to the restlessness brought on by our electronic devices.

In conclusion, reading is an activity that leads to better lives all around. Incorporating it as a daily habit will serve you wonders. If you're having trouble starting or keeping up with it, try to first choose a book that will allure your interests. Then gradually you can gravitate to other genres that perhaps have more knowledge to offer. Place your book somewhere you'll always see it: on your bedside table, your work desk, or anywhere you spend a lot of your time. This will ensure that you don't forget to take a few minutes to exercise your brain. It may be slow-going at first, but once you pick up some steam, you'll find yourself loving it, and may find that it's now more difficult to control yourself from reading too much.

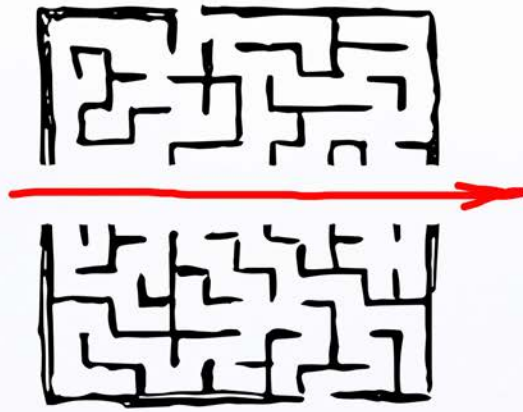
Dallas McClain  
Editor-in Chief





***“You simply can’t think efficiency with people. You think effectiveness with people and efficiency with things.” – Stephen R. Covey***

**— PRODUCTIVITY —**



## THE FLOW STATE

Have you ever experienced the feeling where you can do no wrong, where every action you take is perfect, where time slows down or speeds up and you're totally in the moment undistracted by what's going on around you or by the voice in your head?

If you answered yes you've experienced The Flow State.

The Flow State is the ultimate human performance state, it's often referred to in layman's terms as "the Zone." It's that time when you perform perfectly. Where everything is effortless, time dilates and you are often left with a huge buzz and a sense of well being.

Repeated entry into The Flow State is associated with higher levels of happiness, longer lifespans, higher levels of wealth and more career success. Perhaps the most relevant benefits in today's viral environment are upgraded overall health and improved immune systems.

It's also been calculated that you perform up to 350% better when you are in a flow state.

In fact if biohacking is the quest for peak performance, The Flow State is the pinnacle of that search.

No wonder companies like Apple, Google and Microsoft are spending millions on projects to implement more of it in the workplace. But how do we, who don't have the budget of these

mega corporations get more Flow in our lives, especially at the moment where its immune boosting effects are needed more than ever? Well, the first step is to understand how it works.

Before we get anywhere near the flow state we have to go through a series of steps, the first is...

### **The Struggle Phase.**

This is, as the name would suggest, the unpleasant (but absolutely necessary) part. It's also where we'll spend most of our time. We research, we experiment, we fail over and over again, but each time we fail a little less. This is the phase where we're practicing a new skill and messing it up every time; the time when we're desperately trying to work out how it all fits together; the part when we're pissed off and disillusioned and tempted just to sack it all off and go to the pub.

During this stage cortisol levels rise and our brain is emitting beta waves- types of waves often related to problem solving. It's frustrating, stressful and is the very reason most of us don't really have much experience of Flow, because we give up long before we get there. Those who don't give up come up against another problem.

You see, we have been conditioned since a very early age to believe old sayings such as "try, try and try again" or "if you work hard enough you can achieve anything." And so we do, we struggle harder and harder, getting more and more frustrated, more and more stressed.

We literally try to bludgeon our way into a flow state, reasoning that if we just keep banging our head against that brick wall long enough we'll break through. Unfortunately... this doesn't work. Why? - Because Flow is an intensely focused but intensely RELAXED state. The key here is the

word "relaxed." With all that frustration and stress generated through the struggle phase there is NO WAY you're relaxed. You have to calm down, release, and clear out that cortisol and breath.

Our mothers were all flow hacking experts. When you got frustrated doing some task or because you couldn't do something well, what did she say? "Do something else for a while, take your mind off it"

And what inevitably happens when you do? You come back and perform 10 times better often wondering what all the fuss was about.

As another example, when do all the best ideas hit you? It usually comes when you're daydreaming (or singing) in the shower! (And you're nowhere near a pen to write down the life changing idea you've just had!) Why the hell is this? Because the second stage of the flow cycle is...

### **The Release Phase.**

We have to shift from the beta brain wave, cortisol fight or flight response of the struggle phase to the alpha brain wave dominated, relaxed release phase. Doing this triggers a whole host of chemical changes within the body, clearing out the cortisol and putting you in that day dreaming, meditative state.

Expert thinkers have been aware of this for years. Einstein used to spend 20 minutes a day on his back in a rowing boat just staring up at the clouds daydreaming. Edison used to sit in a chair with a cricket ball in his hand and fall asleep, so that just as he started to drift off his hand relaxed, dropped the ball and boom - he was hit with an idea.

In the release phase the body and mind relax so we are prepared to enter the flow state. It's only then the magic can happen and when it does you enter...



## The Flow State

The body dumps norepinephrine, dopamine, serotonin, anandamide, and endorphins into the blood stream so we enter a totally altered state. All of these are performance enhancing, feel good neurochemicals which make you faster, stronger, and quicker – both physically and mentally – and make you feel really damn good while doing it. They enable the brain to make new connections at lightning speed and perform at its absolute highest potential. Time speeds up or slows down and every action seems effortless, perfect, almost God-like.

It's literally the most addictive high on the planet. All those weed smoking and drug taking extreme sports athletes are not necessarily drug addicts as much as they are flow addicts. The chemicals in these drugs go part way to simulating the intense high these individuals feel smacking the lip of a 20m wave or dropping down a perfect, powdered slope.

Flow can show up almost anywhere in life and it's not a binary state. So you may have a mind bending, universe twisting flow experience or you may not really notice it. But some simple examples are when you are having a conversation about a topic you find really engaging and you look up and realise an hour has passed! But you could swear you've only been talking for 5 minutes. Another instance might be when you're performing an activity you absolutely love and again all sense of time, even of self, vanish because you're so intent are you on the task at hand.

Computer games are great at inducing the flow state (which is incidentally why they're so damn addictive). Extreme sports and public speaking are other areas where the flow state is experienced often but rest assured that it can show up in almost anything. Hell, for some people it might even show up while washing the dishes!



In the flow state you'll perform up to 350% better than normal and what's more, because your brain makes new connections at an incredible rate, you'll learn A LOT faster. For all us nerds, it's like levelling up your character in a Role playing Game. You are now just intrinsically better and cannot go back to what you were!

The issue here is that the flow state is highly addictive, so we just want more and more. However it's also hugely draining on our biology. It uses up a lot of resources so most of us can't stay there for very long. This is one of the reasons for the "one last go" syndrome in sports: we just want one more go, but because we no longer have the energy to maintain a flow state, this is usually where we get injured.

So the final stage of the flow cycle and the one we always ignore is:

### **The Recovery Phase**

This is where we as biohackers have a huge advantage. How do we recover effectively? - By eating right, sleeping well and supporting our bodies in every way we can recover properly and help prepare ourselves for the next flow experience.

In short, the stronger our biology is, the more often we're able to get into the flow state and the longer we can stay there. This then forms a feedback loop as the flow state itself improves our health and upgrades our biology. All of this means we'll be happier, higher performance individuals and crucially, we'll be better naturally protected against invaders such as Covid19 when using the FLOW process to our healthy advantage.

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

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After leaving the Royal Marines Sam Guest embarked on a career dedicated to Optimal Human Performance. Combining his 2 passions he works as a peak performance coach for extreme sports athletes helping them unlock their full potential using his unique NTX program.

The Big Cheese - Tantrum Kitesurf

<https://www.TantrumKitesurf.com>

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***“Civilization advances by extending the number of operations we can perform without thinking about them.”***  
**– Alfred North Whitehead**

# TECHNOLOGY

# BEYOND SUPPLEMENTS : HOW LIGHT CAN IMPACT YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Photo by Johannes Plenio from Pexels

We, as biohackers and health-conscious humans, are accustomed to putting things into our bodies in order to upgrade them. We've learned that things like supplements, additives, and so on can help us achieve higher performance and better wellness; And that is true to a certain extent, but by using supplements, for example we often neglect the largest organ in our body: our skin. In today's world, we exile this significant part of our body and banish it from reaping the benefits our ancestors used to get daily.

The average human in today's modern western world spends more than 90% of their time indoors and therefore, out of the sun's nourishing rays. This not only leads to low vitamin D levels, but to a whole lot of other health deficiencies. Then, when we do go outside, we're often taught to take proper precautions such as sunscreen or sunglasses, as wrinkles or skin conditions might occur. We often believe that even the little bit of sun that we do see can't benefit us that much.

## **Light as fuel**

The use of Light therapy goes way back. Before randomized controlled trials, people intuitively knew that all of the light we were being exposed to each day had to impart some health benefits to us. Natural sunlight therapies have been around for the last 10.000 years. The ancient Egyptians called

it "heliotherapy"; the ancient Greeks used frequent sunlight exposure for depressed people. Hippocrates also believed that Greeks were happier and more optimistic than people living in northern countries because of their higher exposure to light from the sun.

We, humans know that our body is a powerhouse that needs fuel to be healthy and functional. So what we surround ourselves with, put into our bodies, and work with daily impacts us more than we might care to admit. Under these circumstances, it is even more important to acknowledge this essential correlation and make it a strong one. We have always absorbed sunlight.

## **From Hippocrates to NASA**

Hippocrates was right. Modern science merely is using/testing specific light frequencies (or wavelengths) with healing properties.

For more than 50 years, science (and NASA in particular) has been researching these specific wavelengths of light. They came to a conclusion, that red and near-infrared wavelengths which occur during sunrise and -set, where the sky is visibly red, are especially beneficial for us humans. The unique thing about these wavelengths is that they don't contain harmful ones that can be dangerous. UV and blue light, for example,



can majorly impact our sleep, circadian rhythm and cause sunburns and even skin cancer.

### The Good Kind of Light

Red-light therapy (RLT), also known as low-level laser therapy or Photobiomodulation, is widely used by pro-athletes to up their recovery rate and therefore, performance rate. Additionally, today there are more than 4000 studies on the topic which prove the diverse therapeutic effects. Research sparks new experiments beyond the professional world and reaches far into today's anti-aging and biohacking communities. Companies on the market produce red light therapy devices for at-home use, which can be seen as a great addition to daily sunlight exposure.

This bandwidth of wavelengths is particularly powerful, as it doesn't only penetrate the skin but reaches into our cells and alters their function. Specifically, with RLT, our mitochondria (also called the powerhouses of the cells) gets targeted. Mitochondria are located inside our cells and take in glucose and oxygen from the food we consume daily. They produce energy, packaged as molecules of so-called ATP (adenosine triphosphate). RLT boosts this natural effect by enabling the mitochondria to produce more ATP. You can see this as supercharging yourself to function even better.

### Quarantined from the sun

In today's world, we are faced with an unprecedented situation. Not only can we as biohackers, but also the general public can feel the effect of not getting enough light. We as humans now have to shine a light on how we can feel better. Especially with simple at-home methods, such as red-light therapy, no matter where you are, you can add the most beneficial wavelengths of sunlight into your daily life. There are tons of use cases specific to overcome quarantine, and the effects then come with our new COVID-19 life. A few examples are:

- Higher immunity through higher NO (nitric oxide) levels
- Better functioning glucose metabolism
- More efficient Vitamin D synthesis through magnesium
- Less inflammation in our bodies.

So even if we can't go out as much as we want to right now or aren't able to because we live in a big city, red-light therapy can be by your side through this. To sum it all up, light is an essential building block for health and well-being. It is crucial (not only today but every day) to get our bodies moving and outside into the sun – or in front of a high-quality red-light therapy panel.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

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We are Babsi and Thomas from Luminoured. We combined our professional expertise in lighting design (Thomas) and psychology (Babsi), sprinkled them with our own experiences, and brought you something unique.

In the simplest terms, with Luminoured, we created a company that breaks down scientific research and offers high-end at-home red light therapy devices. Usually, products in the field can run up to 140k dollars and are only used by Olympic athletes or NASA astronauts.

But to be honest, our true purpose goes far deeper than that. Due to health issues around two years ago, Thomas was in a situation in which his body suddenly lost its performance. Together we explored intensively on biohacking, and after many experiments, Thomas managed to make his body even more powerful. One major steppingstone here was red light therapy.

We are hackers at heart, and we see that technologies, like light hacking, are only going to become mainstream and used by everyday people a long time ahead of us. And that is a pity. That is why we want to make that technology accessible for everyone to incorporate into daily life. And people who take the plunge and get a device for themselves usually cannot grasp the full extent of research and the ideal individual usage of this technology because it is not shown to them in detail. This mixture of factors leads to vast incomprehension among them. We want to change that and want to use this promising technology and make it more accessible and understood.

Luminoured - Light Hacking for a brighter future

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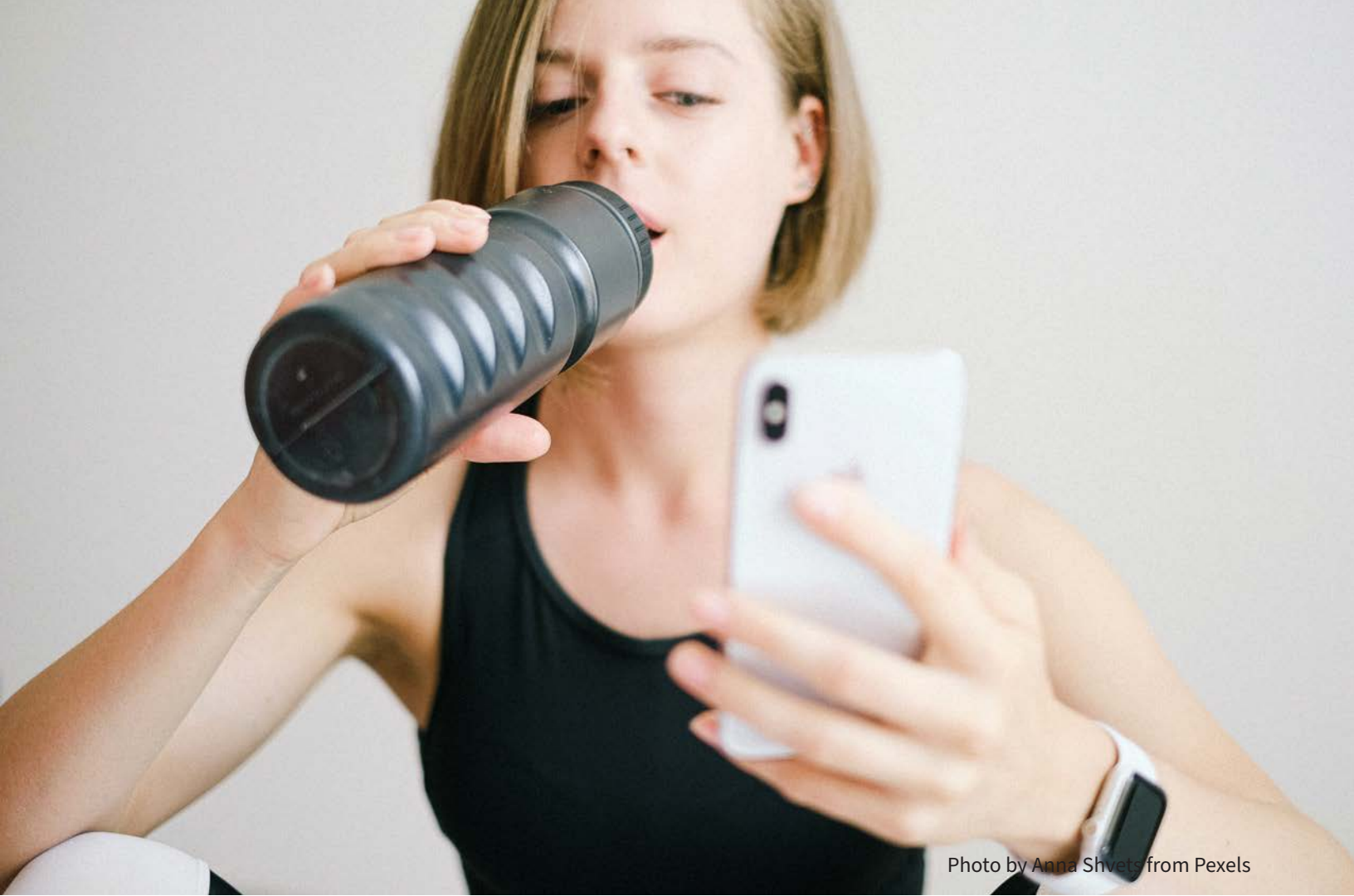


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## IS IT WORTH INVESTING IN SMARTWATCHES OR FITNESS TRACKERS?

At this time of hour, we all are isolating in some way or another; either by staying home or being in a state of quarantine. The rise and spread of the pandemic disease, COVID-19 known commonly as the Coronavirus, is changing everyday life for most people around the world. Cities are under lock down across Europe, entire Asia, the Middle East, and the America.

Amidst this outbreak, there are fitness enthusiasts out there who believe in continuing their routine and are making even

more of an effort in keeping themselves and their community healthy. Since direct contact to an infected person is the way this virus spreads and forms a chain, people are strictly advised to stay home and self-isolate. Working out at home and maintaining some sort of physical activity is must for each human being. Lifestyle factors may also determine if a person is going to get sick or remain healthy.

There are two major factors in this case: Physical activity (PA) and Mental Health (MH). Since both factors are equally

important, here we will focus on PA, whereas MH requires a different forum to present its analysis. A sedentary lifestyle is usually associated with an increased risk for chronic disease, loss of movement, and decreased immune system response. For these reasons, physical activity and movement are salient during the coronavirus pandemic. The WHO recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week, or a combination of both.

Taking this into consideration, I will share some points to explore how by embracing the technology available right now, an individual can uplift and help maintain a healthy lifestyle at home.

### **Wearables and Gadgets at Home:**

As the internet says, “A wrist-worn device that can detect some combination of walking steps, running distance, heart rate, sleep patterns and swimming laps is a fitness tracker”.

Fitness trackers and smartwatches can be worn on the wrist, arm, chest, ankle, and even some shoes have a tracker in them. This technology is mostly available nowadays for fitness enthusiasts, fitness trainers, and even casual exercising individuals etc. Every PA involves determination and challenging oneself. During the COVID lockdown, people are spending most of the time at home since that's the major solution to fight this pandemic. While staying at home however, its important to challenge yourself with some PA. The government also urges every individual to do some or the other PA during the day, since it very essential for following reasons:

- Weight management
- Immunity boosting wellness
- Body flexibility and functioning
- Reducing health risks
- Stress & Anxiety relief

Any wearable we choose, either be a tracker or smartwatch, or gadgets like smartphones, smart TVs, Desktops and Laptops, we can take prime advantage of incorporating their functionalities for our own well-being. Wearables are solely dedicated to tracking your workouts, physical exercises and those activities that fall under aerobic PA. The idea of using a wearable is to make your workout challenging and productive by directing a well calculated and recorded data of the particular exercise.

If we are doing our PA without any challenge or data to be analysed, our PA sessions will eventually become monotonous for most of the individuals since mental health is also being affected side by side during isolation or lockdown. We cannot commit to a healthy lifestyle if we cannot stick to a daily routine and work on our body. One can never fail in maintaining a healthy lifestyle if he or she measures progress and shortcomings.

To make it more interesting, people enjoy when there is a graphical guide to the PA. The presence of well acclaimed channels, pages, and perpetual fitness trainers whose content and support can be gained via smartphone, smart TV, or computer, always keeps one focused and enthusiastic.

Many people have access to their smartphones these days and because of this, we can integrate its mobility into our PA sessions. Smartphones can download PA assistant applications, either for a small cost or for free. A smartphone has sufficient hardware required to track and analyse data of your PA. No other external equipment is required in this setup. This article does not focus on any specific applications or promote any service provider on the basis that people should explore for themselves according to their needs and flexibility.

It is believed that there are some outdoor places in different regions that are open for every individual and thus some people

are allowed to leave their house premises. However people should be really careful while adapting to such situations.

Lastly, I am sharing some of the benefits of wearable technology in our continuous struggle of attaining a healthy lifestyle:

### **More power to the user**

Devices track things like sleep patterns and exercise routines, which have an important effect on overall health. The power to examine and share that data with a fitness consultant, physicians or even a doctor becomes very prolific.

### **Helping people with disabilities**

There are haptic shoes that have GPS technology inbuilt for them to navigate. Other wearables help people manage heart disease, diabetes, and sleep apnoea on their own.

### **Stay connected**

People no longer need to carry huge gadgets to communicate with family and friends. The mobile technology incorporated in wearable devices including virtual assistants such as Google or Siri can help with connecting you with your loved ones without any touch input or physical interaction with these devices.

### **Behavioural Awareness**

Studies show that simple awareness of things like, posture, weight, stress levels, inactivity for hours etc., has a positive effect on our ability to change them. It's hard for the human brain to monitor all of these things at the same time, so that is where wearable technology comes into play.

### **Nutrition Analysis**

There are specific wearables that can determine blood pressure or respiration values. Also, with the help of mobile applications, when a certain PA activity is tracked and analysed, real individuals or even AI can generate a tailor-made training and nutrition strategy for a person. Nutrition is significant, as we all know diet is one of the vital components in having a healthy lifestyle.

This pandemic may have changed our workout routines drastically, but that doesn't mean it has to change our bodies level of physical fitness for the worse. All we need to do is adapt to this change and pivot! And what better way to help us move in flow with this change, than by using a piece of technology, be it something wearable or a smartphone, that can help us stay focused and feel in more control of the transformative process.

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

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Ayush Sharma is Tech enthusiast from India, who obtains information related to Mobile devices, electronic gadgets and more and reviews them on the basis of facts and practicality. He has working experience in Business Development and is teaming up as Technical writer for Biohackers Update.

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# CLOSING THE RING AROUND COVID?



The Öura ring, a fundamental in the biohacking tracking arsenal, has been worn by Princes, tech billionaires and of course those of us who want to self-optimize. Most recently The NBA purchased more than 1,000 Öura rings as it's basketball players and coaches head to Orlando, Florida, to restart their season as the US tries to regain some sense of normalcy after the initial quarantine due to Covid-19's first wave.

The ring, if you don't already know, is one of the most advanced trackers out there, especially when it comes to the one place we can truly control our lives: our bedroom. It measures not just our sleep, but our temperature, breathing, heart, stress and of course our dreamtime - REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep! It also tracks your daytime activity too, including random situations such as being immersed in an icebath, doing the dishes or running the Gobi Desert. its titanium durability is second to none.

During the pandemic, it's this very versatility that took on an even more important role than our snooze time optimization. Öura has been involved with the University of California, San Francisco and West Virginia's Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute where 3,000 health professionals and emergency workers are wearing the ring. The studies are leveraging Öura's biometric sensors to help predict and make more effective decisions concerning the spread of COVID19. Over 150,000 Öura users can also opt in to help with the development of an algorithm helping to understand and manage this pandemic. With the coronavirus still on the prowl, perhaps the Öura ring can help set our minds at ease a bit with its complex tracking, premium durability and viral-combating technology.



Fiona Austin is a positive psychologist practicing in the UK and Spain. She takes her clients outside for walk and talk sessions, introducing individuals, families and companies to fundamental biohacking through her programme Nature Sense - Going outside to feel good Inside.

Websites: [www.NatureSense.info](http://www.NatureSense.info)  
<http://www.bmcc.biz/>

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You all ROCK!

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