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# 10 AUTOIMMUNE HACKS

# A Note From **Elissa**



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Hi there! I am so happy to be able to share my autoimmune story and the lessons that I learned from it with you. Rates of autoimmune disease are quickly increasing, with the National Institutes of Health stating that at least 23.5 million Americans are currently affected by an autoimmune disease. It is more imperative now than ever before that we become educated on the signs and symptoms of various autoimmune diseases as well as the best practices (both pharmaceutical and holistic) of how to treat them.

I suffered from a thyroid-related autoimmune disease called Hashimoto's for over 20 years of my life. I was constantly in fight or flight mode for as long as I can remember. I experienced many viral issues such as chicken pox, mono, strep throat, tonsillitis, shingles and extreme canker sores. I was the perfect candidate for an autoimmune disease. My immune system was weak and I was always stressed. I experienced the trauma of three miscarriages, which may have been related to my thyroid issues, but none of my doctors made the connection between them.

Then I was diagnosed with cancer and underwent four weeks of radiation on my thyroid, which put it through even more distress. The last straw for me was two years later when I gave birth to my first daughter, Jordan. I may have had Hashimoto's and hypothyroidism before she was born, but there is a good chance that the trauma of labor, and the fluctuation of estrogen that comes with it, ignited my thyroid-related autoimmune disease. I was finally diagnosed with hypothyroidism. Even then, my various doctors did not connect the hypothyroidism to Hashimoto's, despite the fact that Hashimoto's is the leading cause of hypothyroidism.

My symptoms from hypothyroidism and Hashimoto's were seemingly endless. I experienced chronic fatigue, mental fog, hair loss (especially at the ends of my eyebrows), inability to lose weight, constipation, sleep issues, anxiety, vision problems, irritability and depression. I was constantly cold, constipated, I experienced irregular periods, and my joints were always in pain. Once I was finally diagnosed with both Hashimoto's and hypothyroidism, I went on various thyroid medications, like Synthroid, that did not work. Finally, I landed on Armour, which did help ease my symptoms more than the others, but still was not perfect.

I decided to take matters into my own hands. I learned about holistic and natural methods to heal my body and mind, and they paid off. Despite the challenges I have faced with these diseases, I am grateful for my experiences because I can share the knowledge that I have gained with you. Please note: unless stated otherwise, the information that I present to you in this document relates specifically to Hashimoto's and hypothyroidism.

I am sharing these autoimmune hacks with you so that you have the opportunity to help heal yourself like I did!

# THE STATISTICS

**Autoimmune diseases are among the most prevalent diseases in the U.S., affecting more than 23.5 million Americans.**

– National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

**Autoimmune diseases can affect any part of the body.**

– National Institutes of Health

**There has been \$591 million spent by the NIH on autoimmune disease research compared to \$6.1 billion spent on cancer research.**

– American Autoimmune Related Disease Association, Inc.

**Hashimoto's affects about 5 people out of 100.**

– U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**The causes of autoimmune diseases remain largely unknown.**

– National Institutes of Health

**Autoimmune diseases are more common in women.**

– National Institutes of Health

**Some of the most common autoimmune diseases include Type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, lupus, inflammatory bowel disease and Hashimoto's.**

– American Autoimmune Related Disease Association, Inc.

**More than 80 autoimmune diseases have been identified.**

– National Institutes of Health

**In serious cases, global immune suppressing drugs are used to restrain the body's immune response, preventing it from doing further harm. Immunosuppressants render people more susceptible to infections.**

– John Hopkins Medicine

**Hashimoto's disease is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the United States.**

– U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## KNOW YOU'RE NOT ALONE AND THIS IS NOT YOUR DESTINY

Autoimmune diseases are a serious problem—they are a growing epidemic that people are finally beginning to talk about. As I mentioned, over 23 million Americans have an autoimmune disease. For perspective, cancer affects up to 9 million Americans while heart disease affects around 22 million. Since autoimmune diseases have so many different symptoms, the diseases can often go undiagnosed and people end up suffering in silence.

While an autoimmune diagnosis can feel isolating, know that you are not alone in your struggle. There are other people out there (some of whom you probably know!) who understand and empathize with what you are going through. Here are a few things to keep in mind that might help you find hope on what can seem like a lonely journey.

- **If the doctor says nothing is wrong...**

...push them further. Many doctors do not automatically think of autoimmune diseases when they are diagnosing you. Instead, they often look at individual symptoms like anxiety or weight gain and treat them on their own. But you know your body better than anyone else. So if you think your issues are a small part of something bigger, like an autoimmune disease, do not be afraid to speak your thoughts.

- **See a Functional M.D, Integrative Doctor or Naturopath ...**

...who is well-versed in autoimmune diseases. They will take a more holistic, full-body approach to helping you heal and get to the root cause of your health issue.

- **Know which tests to ask for...**

...the most common ones are auto-antibody, organ function and inflammation and nutrient deficiency tests. If you have Hypothyroidism/Hashimoto's, here are the most crucial tests to have done:

<https://elissagoodman.com/health/essential-thyroid-tests/>

- **Be aware of thyroid patterns that do not show up on standard tests...**

...like hypothyroidism caused by pituitary dysfunction, which results from elevated cortisol levels. The increase in cortisol levels may halt the pituitary gland from sending the necessary signals to the thyroid. If this is the case, you will have hypothyroid symptoms, low T4, and likely low TSH as well. Elevated cortisol levels along with inflammation may also disrupt the conversion of T4 to T3. If this happens, you will have hypothyroid symptoms, but your TSH and T4 will read as normal. If tested, T3 will be low. Other thyroid patterns that do not appear on standard tests include hypothyroidism caused by elevated or decreased TBG and thyroid resistance. If you feel as though you may have thyroid issues but your lab results come back as normal, I urge you to raise these patterns with a thyroid specialist.

- **Accept that you may have to take medication...**

...at least for a while. You might be reluctant to take medication, I know I was. Do not beat yourself up about it. This is just the first step to healing, and even though the doctor might say so, you do not need to be on these meds forever. But they can be important in the beginning to help you reset your thyroid and hormones so you can start your healing journey on the right foot. Something that is important to note in regard to Hashimoto's is that, ultimately, it is not a thyroid issue; it is an immune system issue. Thyroid hormones may help some of the effects, but it is most important to address the immune dysregulation that happens with the disease. Thyroid health is absolutely imperative to overall health. You can think of the thyroid as an essential piece of a machine. If that one piece breaks, the whole machine stops working properly. Here is a complete thyroid medication guide: <https://drchristianson.com/the-complete-thyroid-medication-guide/>

- **Find a team...**

...who will support you throughout your journey. Your support team can include friends and family along with other healers (within the fields of nutrition, acupuncture, Reiki, EFT, energy, meditation, breath work, etc.).

- **Do not give up...**

...you can feel better and achieve the health state that you yearn for and deserve. Use your strong instincts to reach your wellness goals and be prepared to maintain the changes that get you there. "The body achieves what the mind believes," after all.

## SORT OUT WHAT IS MYTH AND WHAT IS FACT

Receiving an autoimmune diagnosis can be extremely overwhelming. Not only is it scary and confusing—you may have no idea what to expect when it comes to treating and managing the disease; but there are also plenty of myths and misinformation out there that can prevent you from getting proper care. It can be hard to sort through it all, but here are a few of the most common myths, demystified.

### • Your body is not simply attacking itself...

...like most people believe. Rather, it is often going after viral invaders in different areas of your body. By attacking those pathogens, your immune system might end up functioning in the places that they reside in, causing it to look like it is firing on itself. Research indicates that 90% of people with hypothyroidism produce antibodies to thyroid tissue. This causes the immune system to attack the thyroid, which can cause a decline in thyroid hormone levels over time.

### • Many people think that the disease cannot be reversed...

...and you will be forced to live with it for the rest of your life. When, in reality, with lifestyle and dietary changes, like the ones mentioned here, you can naturally heal your body.

### • People blame genetics for the cause of the disease...

...when, in fact, genetics only play a small role. Environmental aspects, such as toxins, diet, stress and emotional trauma, play a huge part in bringing on autoimmune diseases.

### • You are to blame for this illness...

...when really nobody has a subconscious desire to be sick. You did not bring it upon yourself and you did not manifest this. So, whatever you do, do not blame yourself for this.

### • Being on medication or treatment means your symptoms are totally under control...

...while medication/treatment can help reduce pain or symptoms and may even help some achieve remission, it is not a cure. Many people may still experience flare-ups of symptoms while on medication, or go through multiple trial and error processes to find a combination of treatments that works best for them.

### • Cruciferous veggies...

...like broccoli, cauliflower, kale, Brussels sprouts and many more get a bad rep when it comes to a healthy diet for those with autoimmune diseases. But by eliminating cruciferous vegetables from your diet, you are actually stripping yourself of the vital nutrients that they provide. Sure, extreme overconsumption of these types of vegetables can possibly lead to problems, but when normal amounts are consumed, there is really nothing to worry about. If you are concerned about crucifers, you can steam, cook, or ferment the veggies as this will break down any glucosinolates.

### • Soy...

...is a bit controversial when it comes to autoimmune issues. When you are vegan/vegetarian you need it because it provides an important source of plant-based protein, a slew of vitamins and minerals, and fiber. Just make sure to pick minimally processed (no soy lecithin), non-GMO forms of soy like, tempeh, tofu, miso, and edamame. You do not want to overdo it, so try to stick to no more than 3-5 servings of organic soy a week.

## GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR GUT

Hashimoto's and other Autoimmune diseases can cause damage to the lining of your small intestine, which may allow toxins to enter your bloodstream. This contributes to inflammation and a host of other problems that can make your autoimmune symptoms worse. That is why gut health is so important for healing from an autoimmune disease.

### • Reduce toxic trigger foods...

...in your diet such as gluten, dairy, sugar, GMO corn & soy, hydrogenated fats, high-fructose corn syrup, artificial sweeteners, processed foods and anything you might be allergic or have a sensitivity to. A food allergy can cause an immune system reaction that affects numerous organs and can be life-threatening. In contrast, food sensitivities are generally less serious and often limited to digestive problems. The link between gluten intolerance and autoimmune thyroid diseases (ATDs) is so strong, that many doctors recommend that their gluten intolerant patients get tested for ATD and vice versa. Research shows that an immune response to gluten can last for up to six months each time you consume it – so it is critical to eliminate gluten from your diet as soon as possible after being diagnosed with a thyroid-related autoimmune disease.

### • Take a daily probiotic...

...to regenerate healthy bacteria in your gut and improve your immune system. **Renew Life Probiotic** and **Genuine Health Immune Probiotic** (minimum of 50 billion and more) are my favorites.

### • Add fermented foods...

...into your diet because they contain [live probiotic cultures](#) and you cannot get enough of them. Here are a few that I like: coconut kefir, coconut yogurt kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, tempeh, and unpasteurized miso.

### • Take L-glutamine daily...

... it supports digestion by helping to maintain the mucosal lining of the intestinal tract, which supports immune function. Also, it is used throughout the body for tissue repair and immune support. My favorite supplement is **Pure Encapsulations L-Glutamine Powder** (take minimum of 3 grams in water once daily, preferably on an empty stomach).

### • Sip on gut-healing bone broth or add collagen powder...

... bone broth contains gelatin- one of the most important nutrients for healing and sealing the gut. It essentially spackles holes in the gut lining, preventing food and bacteria from leaking through. Collagen powder contains amino acids that help rebuild the intestinal lining. My favorite collagen powder is **Further Food**. Further Food is a company that was started by three women who all suffered from chronic illnesses. Their products are food-based, which means they are easily absorbed.

### • Take a digestive enzyme...

...digestive enzymes help breakdown your food and extract more nutrients from it. My favorite supplement is **Enzymedica Digest Gold ATPPro**. All of Enzymedica's products are clean label certified and vegetarian, which are just a couple of the reasons why I feel so good about taking its digestive enzymes. Also, you can drink water with lemon and add 1-2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar to help improve digestion.

### • Add fiber to your diet...

...a high-fiber diet reduces levels of disease-causing bacteria, limiting the risk of bacteria moving outside of the gut and triggering various autoimmune diseases. We need a minimum of 25 - 35 grams of fiber per day and many people do not get close to that. Some of my favorite sources of fiber are chia seeds, berries, avocados, various legumes and flax seeds.

\*Parasites, Candida and Other Critters: Some people may require additional treatment of the ecosystem within their intestines if they are suffering from one of these issues. If that is the case, be sure to consult your doctor.

*"If you want to cool off inflammation in the body, you must find the source. Treat the fire, not the smoke. In medicine we are mostly taught to diagnose disease by symptoms, NOT by their underlying cause." – Dr. Mark Hyman*

## TAKING THE RIGHT SUPPLEMENTS TO SUPPORT YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

I want to make sure that you have all the building blocks in place to support a healthy body—and that means making sure you are supplying your body with all the nutrients it needs. The typical diet that most Americans follow is filled with processed foods and chemicals (I will touch more on this later) that are lacking in many nutrients. And even if you are following a healthy diet filled with nutritious fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes, you still might not be getting enough of the vitamins and minerals that your body needs to heal.

The key here is getting enough of the nutrients that will support your immune system and lower inflammation: two of the root causes of any autoimmune disease. That is where supplements come in. If taken correctly, supplements can be extremely effective in delivering high quantities of various vitamins and minerals to support your immune system. However, it is crucial that you only take high quality supplements that contain no fillers, sugar or synthetic substances. Try to buy whole food supplements whenever possible, as they are the easiest to absorb.

These are the supplements that I used to boost my immune system and lower inflammation throughout my journey with Hashimoto's and hypothyroidism and I still use them today.

### • Bio-Active Silver...

... silver has been used for centuries for its microbial properties and in place of antibiotics. It is now used for overall immune health including as natural antibiotic, antifungal, and antiviral remedies. My favorite brand for bioactive silver is **Sovereign**.

### • Goldenseal/Echinacea...

...these herbs are sometimes used interchangeably and are often combined to increase the potency of each other. There are slight differences between them, which serve to complement each other. Both herbs have been around for centuries and help to boost the body's immune system. (Do not use either of them for more than 6 weeks at a time because your body can build up intolerances.) I recommend **Nature's Answer Alcohol Free Liquid or Capsules**. They are extremely clean and organic with no fillers included.

### • Astragalus...

...is a plant within the bean and legume family that has a very long history as an immune system booster and disease fighter. Also, its root has been used as an adaptogen in Traditional Chinese Medicine for thousands of years. My favorite supplement is **Nature's Answer Alcohol Free Liquid or Capsules**.

### • Zinc sulfate...

...taking zinc can be a huge step toward healing from the symptoms associated with autoimmune diseases. When you take zinc sulfate, it goes directly to where the virus is and begins stopping it in its tracks. Additionally, zinc increases your immune system's ability to fight pathogens. I use **Eidon Ionic Minerals** Zinc liquid concentrate (30 drops daily, 2 droppers full per day in water or in veggie juice).

### • Vitamin C...

... when fighting a viral condition, it is important to include vitamin C because it flushes toxins from the liver and calms the central nervous system. The brands I recommend are the **Lipo Naturals Liposomal C** (which does not contain any soy or corn) and **Pure Encapsulations Ester-C 1000 mg**. I use a minimum of 2,000mg per day.

### • Vitamin D...

... can modulate the innate and adaptive immune responses. A deficiency in vitamin D is associated with increased autoimmunity as well as an increased susceptibility to infection. My clients usually take 5,000 i.u. of Vitamin D3 and I recommend that their levels remain between 60 and 80 ng/mL. I also recommend that everyone get their Vitamin D levels checked regularly.

### • Omega 3's...

... omega-3 fatty acids fortify the endocrine system and help strengthen the central nervous system so it is less susceptible to damage from the excessive amounts of stress in your life. Essential fatty acids also play an important role in reducing and preventing inflammation within the body. My favorite supplement is **Pure Encapsulations O.N.E Omega** or **Pure Encapsulations EPA/DHA Vegetarian**. I recommend that most people take a minimum of 2g since lowering inflammation is absolutely essential to overall health.

*“Removing eggs from your diet completely will give you a powerful fighting chance to reverse disease and heal.”*

*– Anthony William, Medical Medium*

## LOWER YOUR VIRAL AND TOXIN LOADS

There are some common culprits at the root of so many of today's health issues. They are the toxins that we have been exposed to over our lifetime—anything from fluoride, pesticides and heavy metals in the air we breathe, the water we drink and the foods we eat, to bacteria in our makeup, beauty products and household cleaning supplies. These toxins can help cause an autoimmune disease and slow down the healing process.

### • Drink 16 ounces of organic green juice...

...every day. Celery has worked for me—it can be an amazing way to eliminate toxins from the body. It helps rebuild HCL, which leads to better digestion. If I don't drink plain celery, I will add in cucumber, lemon, ginger, romaine, parsley and rotate in cilantro, spinach, kale, arugula and dandelion greens.

### • Be aware of the toxins in the products you are using...

...as they may contain parabens, sodium sulfates and other chemicals that may bring you harm. Be mindful of the products you are using, from those in your cleaning closet to your bathroom cupboard, and try to find products with natural (and pronounceable) ingredients.

### • Take your shoes off before coming in your house...

...most of the waste we are exposed to is from substances that we track into our home—things like lead or contaminants. As we walk around throughout the day, down countless city streets and across bathroom floors, these forms of waste get stuck to our shoes. We bring that into our homes and it off-gases, we breathe it in and it enters our bodies. The fact is, these toxins may be the most important cause of autoimmune diseases.

### • Take a detox supplement and drink detox tea...

...with a powerful combination of N-Acetyl L-Cysteine, milk thistle seed, schizandra berry, turmeric root, and dandelion root to support liver health. My favorite one is **Innate Response Innate Detox**. We are exposed to

astounding amounts of pollution. Over 80,000 chemicals have been introduced into our society since 1900, and only 550 have been tested for safety. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), about 2.5 billion pounds of toxic chemicals are released yearly by large industrial facilities. And 6 million pounds of mercury are poured into our air every year. I love **Traditional Medicinals' detox tea** too.

### • Eat...

...sea vegetables and wild-caught fish for iodine. Iodine is a great antiseptic, meaning it immediately kills germs. Plus, it is a great antiviral and antibacterial. Kombu\*, Wakame or Nori are great sources, but stay away from hijiki because it can be high in arsenic. Also, iodine is a crucial mineral used by your thyroid to make thyroid hormones and sometimes we can be iodine deficient. Make sure to get your iodine levels checked by your doctor regularly. (Excessive iodine can cause or worsen symptoms for people with previous thyroid autoimmunity, so be sure to raise the topic of iodine with your thyroid specialist).

### • Eat...

...a high intake of chlorophyll-rich green foods like raw spinach (24 grams in one cup) and raw parsley (19 grams in 1/2 cup). Sipping on organic chlorophyll and/or spirulina water throughout the day is great too. The more green foods you consume throughout the day, the better you are going to detox.

### • Eat...

...Foods like Brazil nuts, beans, peas, cremini mushrooms, shiitake mushrooms, and unprocessed organic soy products because they are high in selenium, which is one of the most crucial minerals for thyroid health. Selenium helps to remove thyroid-harming substances. Plus, iodine is also critical for thyroid health and it cannot carry out its functions without selenium. Your body does not produce selenium, so you must obtain it from your diet or a high quality supplement. It is important to note that supplementing selenium with low iodine status may actually make hypothyroidism symptoms worse.

\*Kombu can contain up to 2,984 mcg of iodine per seaweed sheet (1 gram). This provides almost 2,000% of the recommended daily so use sparingly.

## ADJUST YOUR DIET

The Standard American Diet is riddled with pesticides, chemicals, and GMOs that your body does not know what to do with. The industries making the majority of your foods are focused on their bottom lines, which benefit from incorporating these toxins, not your health. It is no wonder that you have become confused about what you should be eating. The Western diet is filled with unhealthy fats, hormones, antibiotics and other chemicals created in a lab and your body goes into overdrive just trying to break this stuff down. Highly processed foods, those with large amounts of added sugar, and dairy can contribute to inflammation, which your body already has high amounts of when combating an autoimmune disease. But by eating healthy, natural and nutrient-dense foods, you can actually set your body up to heal itself.

### • Eliminate processed foods...

...because it's not natural to eat anything out of a box or can. Anything with ingredients you can't pronounce or understand—don't eat it!

### • Buy organic and Non-GMO...

...to reduce your toxic load intake because the pesticides and chemicals used on most produce have adverse health effects. If you cannot afford to go completely organic, check out the [Environmental Working Group's yearly Dirty Dozen Report](#) to find out which foods you must buy organic and which conventionally grown foods are safe to purchase.

### • If you eat animal protein...

...be sure it is organic, grass-fed, pasture-raised, hormone and antibiotic-free and wild-caught. Limit your intake and choose high quality animal protein sources from companies like [Butcher Box](#) and [Vital Choice Seafood](#). Do not eat eggs – they are harmful due to the ability of lysozymes (found in egg whites) to penetrate the gut barrier and enter the bloodstream, triggering leaky gut.

### • Eat your leafy greens and vegetables...

...this means half your plate should be veggies, because they are rich in phytochemicals, vitamins, and minerals that prevent all types of disease, increase your energy and provide fiber for healthy digestion. Some of my favorite leafy greens are spinach, arugula, watercress, romaine, kale, swiss chard and bok choy. My veggie staples are broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, zucchini, asparagus, beets, carrots, red cabbage sweet potatoes, squash, leeks and onions (eat the rainbow!).

### • Stop eating so much sugar...

...because all types of diseases feed on it! You should be eating no more than 25 grams or 6 teaspoons of sugar per day. For perspective, one can of soda has 40 grams of sugar! Healthy thyroid function depends on keeping your blood sugar levels in a healthy range, and [keeping your blood sugar levels in a healthy range](#) depends on a healthy thyroid. Check out the list of hidden sugar names [here](#) so that you can avoid sugar in all of its harmful forms.

### • Eat your berries...

...they contain many essential nutrients including vitamin C, potassium, and folate and are packed with antioxidants. Whole fruits are also an excellent source of fiber and they support the friendly bacteria in your gut that are so crucial to immune function.

### • Soak your beans, legumes and grains...

...soaking beans before cooking helps to remove some of the indigestible sugars that cause gas and limit lectins (a high intake of lectins can cause damage to the intestinal lining and you can get an upset stomach, diarrhea and bloating).

*"If a fish is swimming in a dirty tank and it gets sick, do you take it to the vet and amputate the fin? No, you clean the water. So, I cleaned up my system. By eating organic raw greens, nuts and healthy fats, I am flooding my body with enzymes, vitamins and oxygen." – Kris Carr*

## SHOW YOURSELF SOME LOVE

Before anything else, practice self-love. Let me be clear that, for me, this is the most important hack. Establishing a consistent practice of self-love is critical to healing because you have to put yourself in a positive, loving mindset to heal. While it may seem selfish to focus on yourself and your needs, it is an inside job and it must be done if you want to thrive long-term. There is some confusion on what self-love actually means. It is much more than taking a bath and having a spa day. There is no magic pill you can take to stop your negative self talk, your repetitive destructive patterns and your choice to put yourself last. No one can ever make you happy or loved until you practice those feelings yourself—and there are some great ways to begin this self-love journey.

- **Choose yourself first...**

...even if that means you have to start turning down activities and interests that do not serve you in the moment. Recognize when you are tired, overwhelmed or simply not feeling it and honor that instinct (do not give into any guilty feelings after making your decision).

- **Schedule time to provide your body with rest, exercise, comfort...**

...and whatever else it may need. Schedule a full body massage, reflexology foot massage or a soothing facial. Try an infrared sauna or [restorative yoga session](#). Even just exercising 3-4 times a week can be a way to care for yourself. These are just a few simple ways that you can listen and respond to your needs.

- **Find a positive mantra...**

...and repeat it to yourself every day. If you repeat something to yourself enough, chances are you will start to believe it. This is something I said to myself daily while I was on my own journey, “Every day and every way, I am getting better and better,” until, eventually, it became true!

- **Write down 3 things you love about yourself...**

...daily. Owning your inner and outer beauty is a tremendous act of self-love. Make sure you have something different to jot down each day. It may seem hard at first, but you will be amazed at how many positive things you notice about yourself with a simple shift of mentality.

- **Do something you are good at and tap into your creativity...**

...for a simple and easy self-esteem boost. It can be something as easy as cleaning out your closet or making a beautiful dinner for others or yourself and savoring the food that was made with love and care for your body. Explore hidden interests you have ignored like painting, dancing or writing.

- **Stay in your integrity...**

...verbalize what is true for you without swallowing the words that express what you truly feel, think, or want to do. Research shows that suppressing your feelings and desires can lead to physical and mental illness.

- **Spend quality time...**

...with the people who make you feel good and lift you up when you are around them. If someone leaves you feeling depleted, it is probably a sign that they are not providing positivity to your life. Have the courage to limit or remove the toxic people from your circle.

## LOWER YOUR STRESS LEVELS

Stress is pretty hard to avoid. Whether it is stemming from a job, finances, relationships, family dramas, the list goes on and on. It is easy to feel the effects of stress start to build up in your body. Stress in the short term is not necessarily bad. It can occasionally be used as a strong motivator if you have the right mentality around it. But when you stay stressed for long periods of time, it can do some serious damage to your body.

A recent study raised the possibility that stress may cause various autoimmune diseases. Cortisol is one of the stress hormones that helps to prepare your body in a “fight or flight” situation. When cortisol levels are raised for too long though, like in the instance of chronic stress, it can wreak havoc on your immune system and blood sugar levels, leading to various health issues. Constant stress also plays a role in the development of autoimmune diseases and can make the symptoms worse. However, there are some effective ways to manage stress.

### • Practice mindfulness meditation...

...to help you stay in the moment instead of constantly thinking ahead and picturing worst-case scenarios. It even helps your body cope with stress better in the long term. All you need to do is focus your attention on a single point of reference for a period of time. That could be your breath, a mantra, an aspect of body awareness or even a single word. My favorite meditation app is Unplug and it is great for beginners and more experienced meditators alike.

### • Do breathwork exercise...

...to prevent your body from entering fight-or-flight mode and diminish the harmful, immune suppressing stress response. Try breathing in through your nose for 4 seconds, and then releasing it through your mouth for 6-8 seconds. Practice daily for 5-10 minutes.

### • Yoga...

...can create a calm sense of mind. Studies suggest that yoga provides possible benefits for various aspects of wellness including stress management, sleep, emotional health and more. Try taking a yoga class or simply creating a space at home where you can practice.

### • Go out in nature...

...at least once a day. And be sure to leave your phone at home. Simply being in nature can be beneficial for your mental health. We have an instinctual drive to connect with nature because it is wired into our brains.

### • Sleep...

...anywhere between 8-9 hours per night. The research is clear: lack of sleep or poor sleep damages your metabolism, causes cravings for sugar and carbs, makes you eat more, and drives up your risk of autoimmune disease.

### • Adaptogens...

...can provide adrenal support and help your body create a better response to stress. Ashwagandha, holy basil and rhodiola are some of the most effective ones. You will find many adaptogens blended together in my favorite supplement from **Innate Response Adrenal Response. Organic India Tulsi Tea** is another one of my favorite adaptogen blends for stress reduction.

### • Licorice root...

... is one of the most powerful herbs for restoring the adrenal glands which are the first ones to take a hit when you are chronically stressed. It can also reduce inflammation in your intestinal tract. Weak adrenals can cause hypothyroid symptoms without any problem in the thyroid gland itself. In such cases, treating the thyroid can be ineffective if you are not addressing the adrenals themselves. Start with licorice root tea from **Traditional Medicinals**.

## RELEASE ANY TRAUMA YOU MAY BE HOLDING ON TO

We carry with us so many of the toxic and traumatic experiences that have occurred throughout our lives. These are events that could have happened as early as childhood. Research shows that our subconscious is fully downloaded by the age of 6, so what happens to us in those years can stick with us for life. And, while we may not be thinking about those traumatic events at all times, they still have an impact on the way we think, manage stress and even on our body's ability to heal.

For me, after I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma and completed the treatments for it, I thought and hoped that I was done with cancer's nasty effects. But what I did not realize at the time was that, even though the physical disease was gone, the trauma from the ordeal lingered on. Holding onto these distressing experiences caused me a great deal of anxiety. I think it also contributed to my development of Hashimoto's and made it severely worse. Carrying your trauma with you can change the way your body operates, and not for the better. That is why finding a way to release your trauma is so crucial.

### • Find a loving therapist...

...who can help you learn to become more aware of your inner experiences and to eventually befriend what is going on inside of you. This includes physical sensations, emotions and thoughts. A good therapist will help you to learn from past experiences and better comprehend your true feelings.

### • Invest in an energy healer or shaman...

...to help you heal, get in touch with the negative subconscious thoughts that may be stopping you from thriving and remove any blocks within your body's energy.

### • Try EFT tapping...

...to send a flow of calming energy throughout the body to promote healing. The basic technique requires you to focus on a negative emotion, a fear or anxiety, a bad memory or an unresolved problem. As you maintain your mental focus on this issue, use your fingertips to tap 5-7 times each on 12 of the body's meridian points (points that lie along channels of energy). Tapping on these meridian points, while concentrating on accepting and resolving the negative emotion, will access your body's energy, restoring it to a balanced state. [Learn more about EFT Tapping](#) so that you can decide whether or not you want to experiment with it.

### • Take a reiki meditation class...

...in order to promote relaxation, calm the mind and, ultimately, reduce stress so you can become more balanced in mind, body and spirit. Reiki is a form of meditation where a master uses his or her hands to infuse life force energy into certain parts of your body. (This might sound a little out there, but, trust me, it works).

### • Allow yourself to talk...

...through your trauma. Just putting those words and moments out into the world, instead of keeping them locked in your mind, can provide a much-needed release.

### • Go watch the sunset...

...to rebuild trust with the world around you. Understand why you are watching it and appreciate the beauty and stability of the world. Then the next morning, as the sun rises, a fire inside the soul will ignite and your soul will start to rebuild. The sun will never let you down, because it will always rise.

### • Purge emotional writing...

...every emotion has a charge, and the positive or negative energy an emotion generates has a real and measurable impact on our bodies. The act of writing allows us to physically release some of that. [Dr. Sadeghi](#) recommends that we write for 12 minutes and at the end of it, we immediately burn the paper without reading it. This allows us to purge even more of that charge and it serves as a symbol of letting go.

## DRINK MORE WATER

If there was poison sitting in front of you, would you drink it? NO! But every time you drink tap water you poison your system, creating the perfect conditions for disease to grow and spread. Your standard water sources are contaminated with chlorine and heavy metals like lead, mercury, arsenic, and fluoride, to name a few. A 2015 report revealed that approximately 77 million Americans live in areas where the water systems were in violation of safety regulations like the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Your body is composed of at least 60% water, so water is the most important resource there is. If you are not drinking enough water, there is likely a saturation of toxins in your blood and cells. As toxins build up, your cells behave erratically and multiply, leading to harmful tumors. Proper intake of water normalizes every part of your body and reduces your risk of diseases.

- **Drink filtered water...**

...out of a glass bottle. If you use tap water, implement some purification mechanism – at the least, a good filter. Some of the better filters will remove the fluoride and many other compounds from your water. The better way to go is to have a home reverse osmosis system.

- **Drink half your body weight...**

...in ounces every day. This is the minimal amount needed to rehydrate the body and flush out toxins.

- **Opt for adding minerals to your water...**

... you can simply add a pinch of Himalayan sea salt to a glass of water or use a supplement like **Ultima Replenisher Powder**, which contains vitamins, minerals and all 6 electrolytes. The powder can be sweet, so use it to your taste level. I love Ultima as a company because it never uses high fructose corn syrup (all of its powders are sweetened with pure stevia leaf) and nothing artificial.

- **The color of your urine...**

...is an indicator of whether you are drinking enough water. The deep dark yellow color signals that you need to drink more water and the light-yellow color urine is a sign that you are hydrated.

- **Add lemon to your water...**

...for an extra detoxifying boost and to cleanse your intestines.

- **When to drink water...**

...it is essential to drink a minimum of 16 ozs. of water when you wake up before any coffee, tea or food. Your body has been cleansing/detoxing all night and needs to excrete these toxins. I usually drink in between my meals because water can dilute important digestive enzymes if consumed while eating.

- **Do not consume water from any plastic bottles...**

...because plastic containers are harmful. Researchers have discovered that some materials designed to be alternatives to bisphenol A (BPA) could be leaching from plastic into foods, drinks, and other items contained in plastics. Avoid plastic all together and use stainless steel or lead-free glass instead.



# My Closing Note!

*“It’s never too late to start eating well. A good diet can reverse many ... conditions. In short: change the way you eat and you can transform your health for the better.” - T. Colin Campbell*

Now that you have a wealth of information to guide you on your journey towards autoimmune recovery, be sure to implement it every day. Remember, change does not happen over night. This approach will require some patience (as I am sure you are already used to if you are suffering from an autoimmune disease). It is crucial to note that everyone’s experience with an autoimmune disease is different and what works for one person may not work for you. You may have the same disease as someone else, but you might be exhibiting different effects. That is why finding a specialist that you trust and implementing a range of these suggestions is so important. There is no quick fix for this, but, if you are anything like me, this holistic approach will support you far better than a solely pharmaceutical one. Do not give up and know that you are not alone.

*As another resource to help you in this healing process, I highly recommend checking out my new 7-Day RESET Cleanse. It is loaded with nutrient-rich juices and soups that will help detoxify your body and give you a big boost on your road to autoimmune recovery.*