

Gut Rescue

MICROBIOME FAST TRACK PLAN



EFFORTLESSLY BANISH BLOATING, CRAVINGS, AND BELLY FAT

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Supercharge Your Microbiome Repair

Are you in a hurry to get the healthiest microbiome of your life? And get rid of bloating, cravings, and belly fat for good? This Fast Track Plan for you!

To help heal your gut at lightning speed, we've gathered the exclusive insider tips, lifestyle changes, and new habits that can supercharge your results. We're going beyond just what you should and shouldn't eat to speed up your results and get your microbiome thriving even faster.

Learn how you tweak your sleep, exercise, stress management, and more to help heal your microbiome fast and keep it healthy forever. The more of these tips you implement, the faster your microbiome will heal, and the stronger it will become!

We've compiled tips for sleep, exercise, time outdoors, antibiotic use, and stress management. The hard work is done for you - just follow this plan and get on the fast track to being effortlessly slim!

Sleep

Sleep should be one of your top priorities. Sleep is when your body repairs and regenerates itself - including your microbiome! But very few people get enough sleep or have good sleep hygiene - and it's hurting your microbiome.

Stop saying you'll sleep when you're dead and realize that if you don't get enough sleep, you'll be dead long before you want to be!

You might get up early to go to the gym (no matter what time you went to bed) or stay up late watching TV to unwind - but both of those practices only compromise your sleep and your health. Instead of seeing getting up too early or staying up too late as a "good thing" you must reframe sleep as the most important thing you can do for your health. Think about going to bed early as a treat - and waking up at the same (reasonable) hour every day as the ultimate "good morning."

However, improving your sleep isn't just about getting enough hours every night (although that's step #1!) - it's also crucial to improve your sleep hygiene. You need to start prioritizing sleep - and sometimes that means choosing sleep over watching TV, or finishing some chore, or going out socializing. Here are some ways you can make sleep a priority.

#1 Get Enough Hours Every Night

Between kids, demanding work schedules, and late-night TV, most adults don't get adequate sleep. The exact amount of sleep you need is very individual, but most people need between 7 and 9 hours. When you fall asleep quickly and wake up easily, you're getting the ideal amount of sleep for you.

#2 Have a Consistent Bedtime

You have an internal "body clock" called your circadian rhythm. Your circadian rhythm plays an essential role in all of the processes in your body - and when it gets disrupted, it has a cascade of effects throughout your body.

(This is why night shift workers have poorer health than do day shift workers!)

Whatever time of day you sleep, the most important thing is being consistent. If you do sleep at night, it is even better to go to bed and rise along with the sun - that means going to bed (or staying out of artificial light) after the sun



sets and waking up as the sun rises. The ideal bedtime is between 9 and 10 PM.

#3 Sleep in the Dark

How many light sources are in your bedroom? Alarm clock? TV? Your phone (plugged in right next to your bed!). Plus there's light coming in through the windows, too.

This is a big problem because your body's cue to make melatonin (the sleep hormone) is darkness. Melatonin helps you fall and stay asleep and also helps set the circadian rhythm.

Take a few minutes to cover any small electronic lights (like the light near the power button on your TV) with black electrical tape to block them out. Then hang blackout curtains (or substitute a sleep mask if blackout curtains aren't possible).

#4 Get Chilly

Sleep studies show that colder temperatures – somewhere around 65 degrees – seems to be ideal for most people to get the most restful sleep possible. Turn your heater down at night.

#5 Stay Off Screens After Sundown

This goes back to your circadian rhythm - once

the sun goes down, avoid looking at screens which give off blue light.

Just like the light sources in your bedroom, looking at screens before bedtime prevents your body from producing melatonin, the sleep hormone. The blue light emitted by screens tells your body it's time to wake up - not wind down.

The best solution is to put screens down when the sun goes down. Can't do that? You can download a blue-light blocking app for your mobile devices and computer and consider investing in a pair of blue-light-blocking glasses to wear after sundown if you insist on watching TV before bed.

#6 Get Morning Sun

Just like having a consistent bedtime helps to set your circadian rhythm, so does having a consistent wake-up time. Even better, try and get sunlight into your eyes within 30 minutes of rising. Getting morning light in your eyes prompts your body to quit producing melatonin and start making more cortisol to give you the energy to tackle the day.

Just head outside or sit near a window while you eat breakfast and enjoy some natural light.

Exercise

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And while any movement is better than no movement, spending the majority of the day still and then powering through a very intense workout can actually be very stressful to your body.

This isn't to say that all intense exercise is bad - but more a reminder that the majority of your movement should be gentle and restorative. This is the kind of exercise your microbiome loves!

Overtraining is very harmful to your microbiome. But most people have no idea they are overtrained.

Extreme exercise like Crossfit 5 days a week and marathon training has become the norm. The problem is that the same people completing these intense exercises are also raising a family, working a fulltime job, caring for a home, and more. They don't have enough time to adequately recover and stress hormones are destroying their guts causing weight gain and other unwanted symptoms.

Even if your exercise is only moderate, you could be overtraining by under-recovering.

Signs You're Overtraining

- You dread your workouts
- You're not making progress (or even seeing losses in strength and stamina)
- You're sore for days after workouts
- You're exhausted all day, but have trouble falling asleep at night
- You rely on caffeine or sugar to get through your workout
- You're scared that if you back off the exercise, you'll gain weight very quickly
- You've gained weight around your abdomen (or can't lose weight there)
- You feel puffy, and like you're retaining fluids all the time
- You can't remember the last time you took more than a day or two off

Good news: your microbiome prefers gentle, consistent exercise.

What does that mean?

- Increase your activity throughout the day: walk more, sit less
- Incorporate gentle exercises like yoga, walking, and swimming
- Back off intense exercises

You do not need to be a slave to the gym to be healthy - in fact, the healthiest exercise you can do are outdoor activities like walking, riding a bike, or hiking.



Get Outdoors

Why are outdoor activities best?

Not only is your microbiome bolstered by spending time outdoors - soil, plants, and animals can increase microbiome biodiversity, but you're also benefiting from the gut-healing benefits of healthy sun exposure.

Most people in the modern world spend their days indoors and get very little sun exposure daily. But sun exposure is incredibly beneficial for the body as a whole - and the microbiome.

Studies have shown that higher levels of vitamin D from sun exposure can promote a healthy microbiome that can stop the progression of microbiome-related diseases like fatty liver and

metabolic syndrome.

But it's not just about vitamin D - although low vitamin D levels are a serious side effect of inadequate sun exposure. Research has shown that merely supplementing with vitamin D cannot replicate all the benefits of sun exposure.

Research has also shown that the majority of sun damage is the result of burns - not limited daily exposure.

The amount of sun that is healthy for you depends on the color of your skin, family history, and where you live in the world. But so long as you avoid prolonged exposure and sunburns, sun exposure is an integral part of healing the microbiome.

Avoid Antibiotics and Antibacterials

When necessary, antibiotics are life-saving medications.

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But antibiotics are commonly overprescribed and unnecessary these days.

Antibiotics work by killing the bacteria living inside your body - both the GOOD and the BAD. Antibiotics work really well for curing bacterial diseases - but cannot treat viral infections - like most common colds and flu, which they are frequently prescribed for.

The overuse of antibiotics has also contributed to the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, like the antibiotic-resistant staph infection Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

Using antibiotics causes an immediate decrease in microbial diversity - both in species and quantities. And it can take as long as two years for your gut microbiome to recover from antibiotic use. Some researchers think the microbiome never recovers completely after antibiotics.

That's why it's important to avoid using antibiotics whenever you can.

When your doctor suggests antibiotic treatment, bring up your concerns around gut health and ask about alternative treatments. Sometimes antibiotics are prescribed out of an abundance of caution and can be skipped in place of careful monitoring. Other times antibiotic are a necessity - just make sure you ask your doctor about which is the case for you.

Antibacterial products - like disinfecting wipes and antibacterial soap - have also become common alongside antibiotics.

These products are not necessary except in very rare cases. The most common antibacterial agents used in soaps and cleansers, Triclosan, was banned from commercial use in 2015. However, it's still legal in consumer products like toothpaste and soap.

Get rid of any antibacterial cleansers in your home. Regular soap and water are plenty to clean your house and much healthier for your microbiome.



Stress Management and Self Care

Even those with the most “perfect” life face daily stressors, big and small. It doesn’t mean you’re “weak” if you’re dealing with chronic stress - it just means you’re human! When you acknowledge your stress, you can work through it and come out stronger.

As you know, the microbiome and stress have an antagonistic relationship. Stress can deplete the microbiome, and a depleted microbiome decreases your ability to handle stress. For your microbiome, stress is a downward spiral.

That’s why learning to manage stress may be the most important lifestyle change you can make for a healthy microbiome. The goal isn’t to get rid

of stress entirely (though anything you can do to reduce it is terrific) but to learn to better cope with the stressors you cannot change.

What works for you for stress management and self-care is very individual. One person may find yoga or painting stress relieving, while another would think of those activities as chores that have to be done.

Here are some ideas and suggestions for self-care practices you may enjoy. Over the next 28 days, you should try at least 10 of these activities to see what works for you and what doesn’t.

- Go for a walk outside
- Aromatherapy with essential oils
- Call a friend to chat
- Sit quietly for 15 minutes
- Take a 20-minute “power nap”
- Listen to a funny podcast
- Play a game with your kids
- Walk barefoot outside
- Chase your dog or kids
- Jump rope
- Work on a craft or hobby
- Meditate (guided meditations are a great place to start)
- Journal or write a poem
- Light a candle
- Listen to a favorite album
- Savor a special snack or drink

How To Make Lifestyle Changes Work

Even the most ambitious microbiome healer won't be able to implement all the lifestyle changes at once. And in fact, trying to make too many changes at once can be stressful in itself!

The best way to make lasting changes is to start with one simple change and build up from there. Maybe this week you'll replace one intense workout with a restorative yoga class instead. Then hang those blackout curtain and get your bedroom dark before you go to bed. Maybe next week you can try getting more healthy sun exposure.

It's small, incremental steps that form the new habits that will give you a healthy microbiome for life!

But don't forget that there will be bumps in the road and times when you revert to old habits. You might even face resistance from friends and family members who are used to your old habits and uncertain what to think of the positive changes you're making for your health. This is a normal part of making changes and doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong.



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