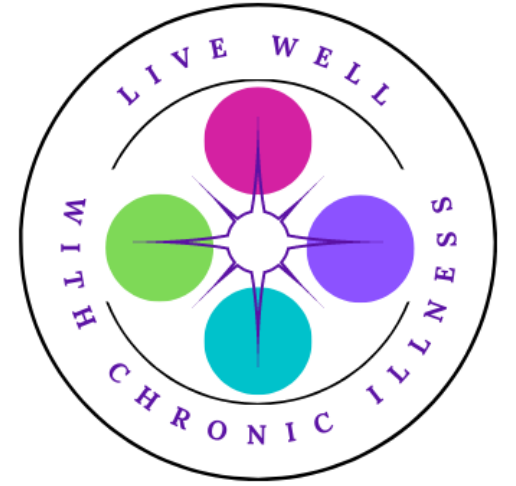


Live Well With Chronic Illness



The Pillars Of Health



Deborah Bircham

Health Coach, Mindfulness Teacher
Holistic and Naturopathic Wellness



QUALIFICATIONS:

- ✓ Naturopathic Nutrition and Health Coaching: *Diploma-College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM)*
- ✓ Hypnotherapy and Psychotherapy: *Mindworks*
- ✓ Mindfulness Teacher: *Teach 10 Institute*
- ✓ *Certified IEMT Practitioner*

MEMBERSHIPS:

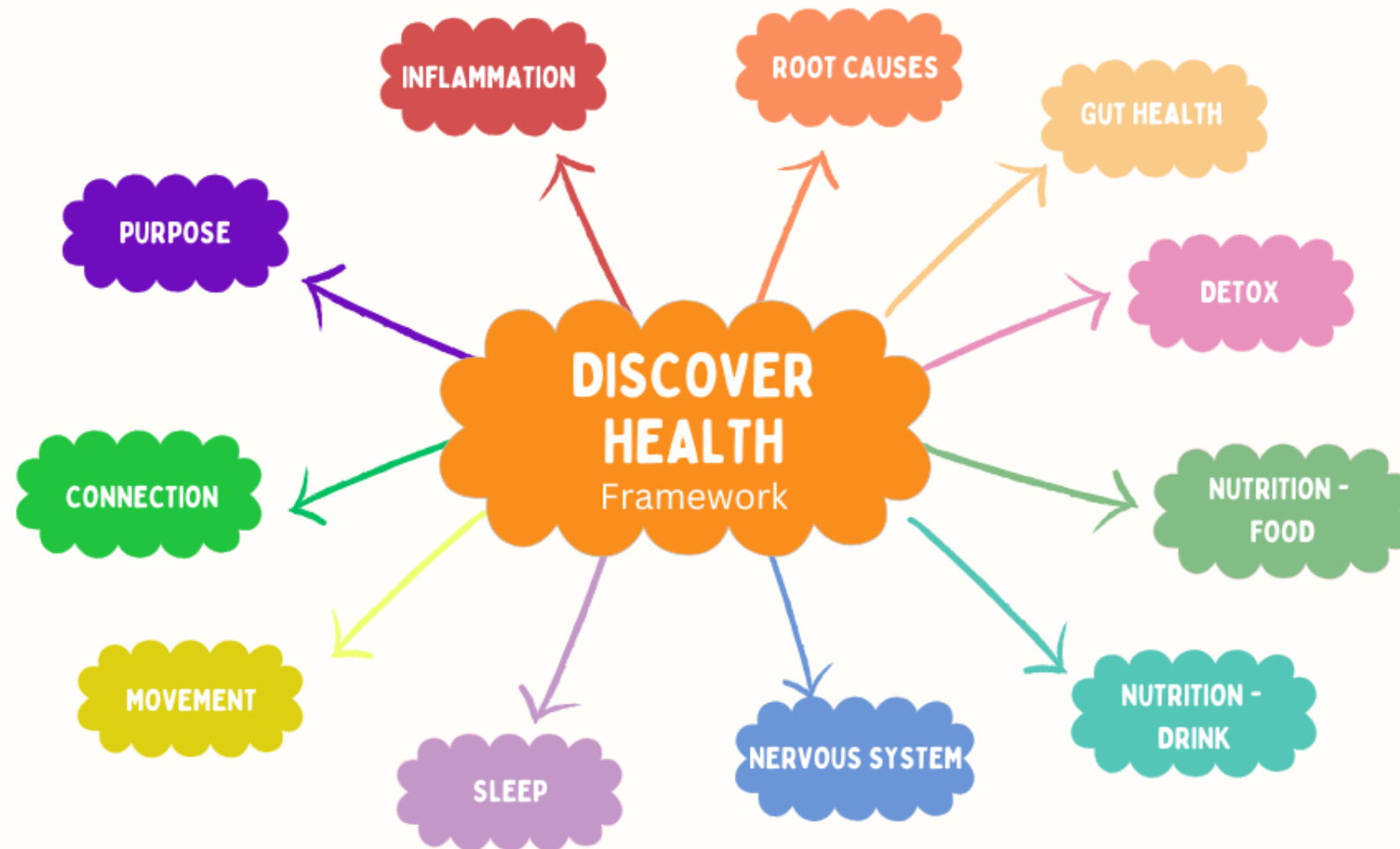
- ✓ National Council for Integrative Psychotherapists (NCIP)
- ✓ UK & International Health Coaching Association (UKIHCA)
- ✓ The Association of Naturopathic Practitioners (ANP)
- ✓ The Association of IEMT Practitioners

Socials: Live Well With Chronic Illness

Email: livewellwithchronicillness@outlook.com

Website: <https://livewellwithchronicillness.co.uk>

Specialises in Lyme
Disease, MCAS,
Dysautonomia and
Chronic Pain

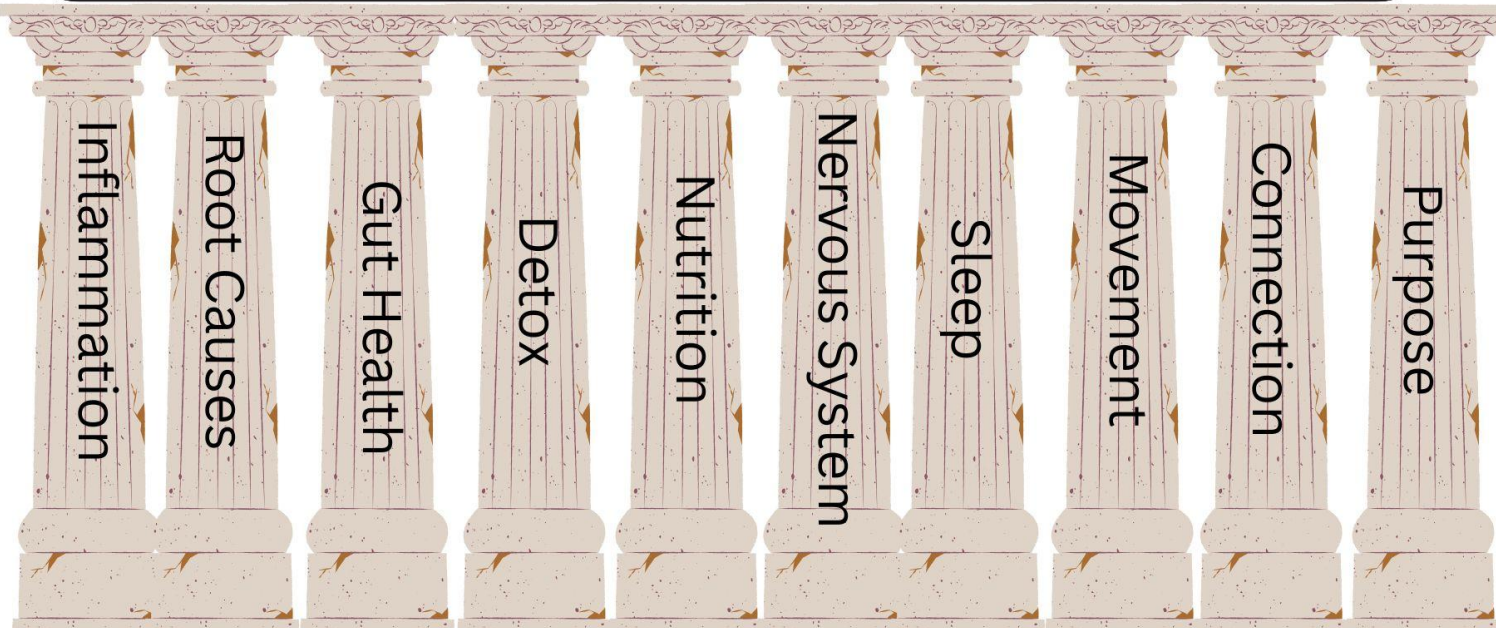




Pillars of Health



Wellbeing



What Does Health Mean to You?

Is good health simply the absence of disease?

If someone who lives with a chronic health condition has all the foundations of health in place, looks after their wellbeing, and maintains a healthy lifestyle, and is happy and content, are they unhealthy?

If someone with no diagnosed health conditions has no foundations of health, lives a stressful, unhappy life, eats nothing but junk food, and feels miserable and unfulfilled – can they be said to be truly healthy?

Gary The Goldfish

Cheap poor quality food

Not had time to clean his tank

Toy castle broken and not replaced

Mate died, not had time to get another

Gary – gets sick

Vet – ointment for his infected fin,
vitamin drops for his food

Gary perks up – for a bit

I still don't have time to clean the
tank, I still don't change his food. I
don't replace his toy, or his mate

Gary gets sicker, and dies.

Naturopathic principles - If you take medications, but you don't change the environment that caused the illness in the first place, you won't heal.



Image by [Narcis Ciocan](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Gary The Goldfish

Naturopathic principle
- If you take medications, but you don't change the environment that caused you to become ill in the first place, you won't heal.



Image by [Narcis Ciocan](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Inflammation



INFLAMMATION

Natural Mast Cell Stabilisers

Anti-inflammatory foods

Remove pro-inflammatory foods



What is Inflammation?

The immune system produces inflammation in response to cell damage or infection.

Inflammation creates heat, swelling, redness, and pain.

It is designed to help stimulate tissue repair and to kill infection.

Acute inflammation is good –
it helps us heal

When the inflammatory process doesn't switch off and becomes long-term, like a continual fire in the body, this can become very damaging to body tissues.



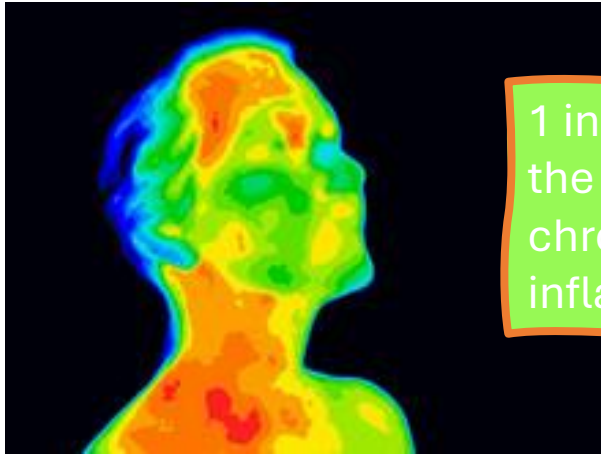
Inflammation increases blood flow to the area, bringing immune cells and nutrients to fight infection and begin repair.





Chronic Inflammation

According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, many people experience some level of low-grade, chronic inflammation due to our Western diet and lifestyle.



1 in 5 people in the UK have chronic levels of inflammation.

Why Does It Matter?

Chronic inflammation is linked to almost every long-term condition, and research increasingly shows that long-term, low-level inflammation is one of the leading causes of most illnesses.

How Chronic Inflammation Affects The Body:

- DNA Damage
- Cancerous Cell proliferation
- Ageing and cell-death
- Atherosclerosis (heart disease)
- Respiratory diseases
- Neurological diseases (Alzheimer's)
- Depression
- Obesity
- Fatigue
- Autoimmune Disease
- Dementia

What Causes Chronic Inflammation?



Many factors can contribute to inflammation

1. A Diet High in Pro-Inflammatory Foods
2. Oxidative Stress
3. Allergies and Intolerances
4. Gut Dysbiosis
5. Environmental Toxin Exposure
6. Poor Detoxification
7. Stress

Anything that creates constant, low-level provocation of your immune system can cause inflammation.



Anti-inflammatory Foods

Regularly incorporating natural anti-inflammatory foods can lower your inflammation levels over time



Pineapple contains bromelain

Cinnamon



Black pepper



Omega 3 fatty acids: oily fish, chia seeds, flax seeds, brussels sprouts, eggs, Olive oil, avocado



Nuts and seeds
walnuts, chia,



Garlic



Quercetin: in apples and red fruits
Berries: red and purple

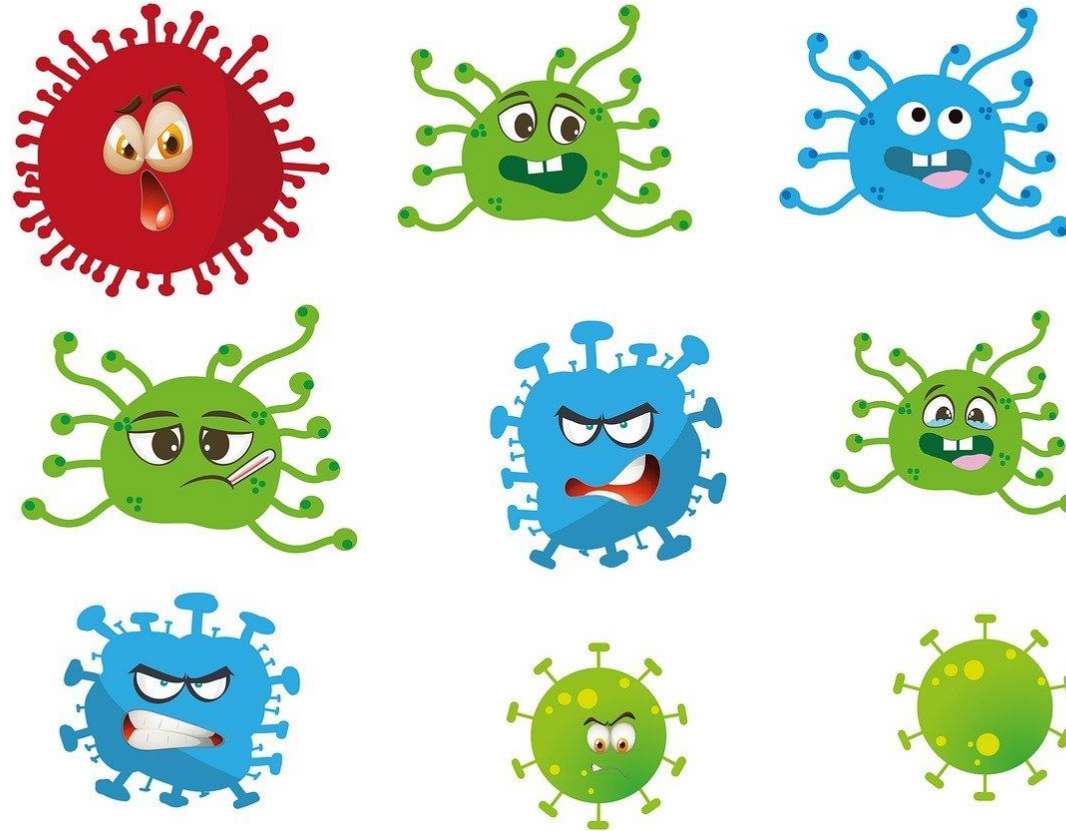


Rosemary

Ginger, turmeric, green tea



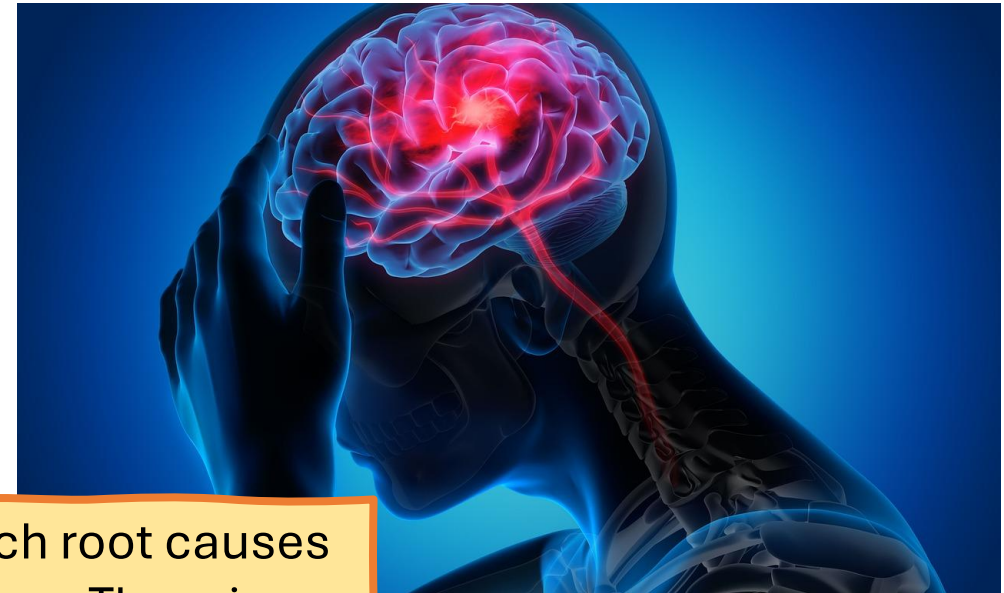
Root Causes



Some Root Causes for Illness



Inflammation
Nutrient deficiencies
Blood sugar issues – insulin resistance/metabolic issues
Mitochondrial dysfunction
Food intolerances
Dehydration
Thyroid issues
Gut dysbiosis
Post-Viral Illness
Neurological dysfunction
Nervous system imbalance
Poor sleep
Hormonal imbalance
Hypoxia – lack of oxygen
Infections – bacterial or fungal overgrowth
Mould exposure
Mental/emotional distress/trauma/ACE



Working out which root causes are relevant for you. There is often more than one factor.

Mitochondria – the Body's Energy Factory



Within almost every cell in the body there are mitochondria

These organelles use oxygen and glucose to produce Adenosine Triphosphate – ATP

When we talk about 'energy' in the context of the body, we are talking about ATP.

ATP is required for every single bodily function

If our mitochondria are not functioning well, we are not going to be making enough ATP

Studies show that many people with chronic health conditions have abnormally functioning mitochondria.

Many of these 'root causes' affect mitochondrial function and that's how they cause fatigue.

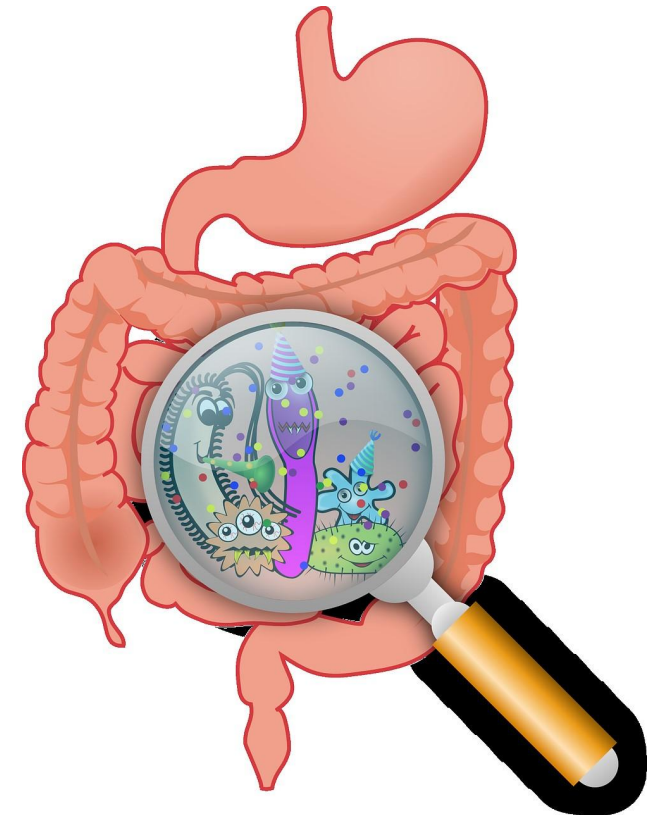
Things that negatively impact Mitochondrial Function

- Infections – viral/bacterial/fungal
- Stress
- Toxin exposure
- Trauma
- Oxidative stress
- Drugs
- Inflammation
- Lack of nutrients

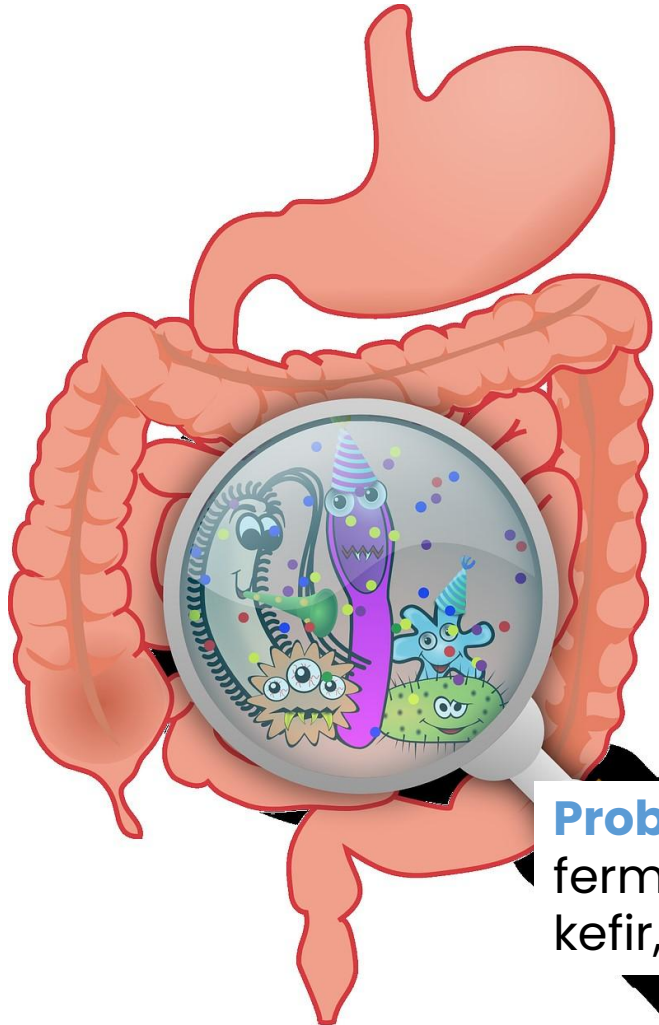


Image by [Sieglinde Sterbling](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Gut Health



The Gut Microbiome



- There are trillions of viruses, bacteria and fungi living in your gut!
- There are more micro-organism cells than human cells, 10-1 (according to some).
- There are as many as 1000 different species of bacteria.
- Many of these micro-organisms are essential for health.
- When harmful bacteria outnumber good bacteria, it's called dysbiosis.
- A dysbiotic gut microbiome has been linked in studies to chronic conditions, especially fibromyalgia, ME and cancer
- Eating food with probiotics can help some people

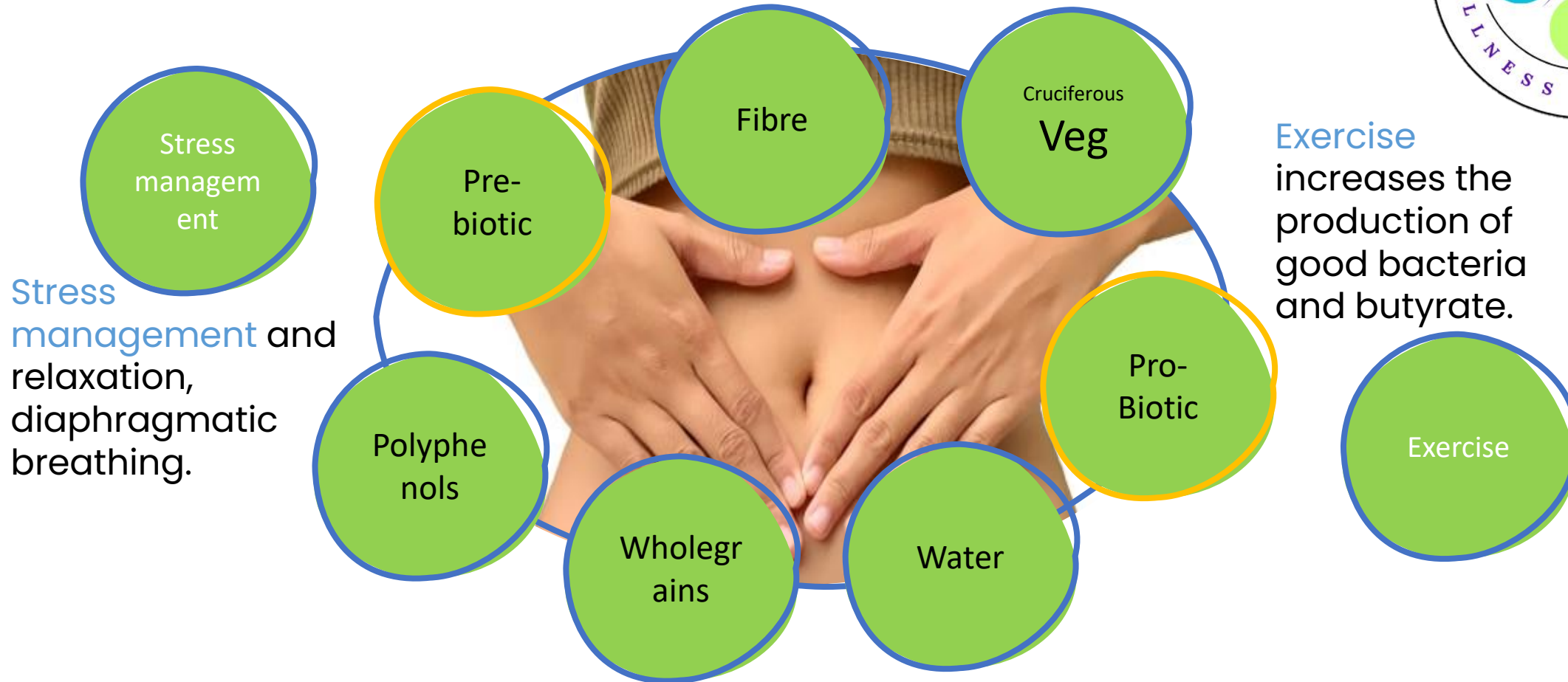
Probiotics are live, healthy bacteria found in fermented foods. kombucha, natto, kimchi, kefir, sauerkraut, live yoghurt.

- <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-84783-9>
- https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/immunology/articles/10.3389/fimmu.2021.628741/full?s=09&fbclid=IwAR3JHgMkpGa2C8v5FGCKzG_Rhys6zH9tFkBAW5dVx02u9ygl6IK3tZ43aJ0



How to Keep Your Gut Happy

By consuming a variety of specific types of foods, we can help our gut become healthy



Detox



Avoiding Toxins

There is increasing research that shows that exposure to the chemicals found in many household products, toiletries, perfumes and foods are linked to inflammation, oxidative stress, and illness

Research suggests that exposure to these toxins in some people can trigger hormone disruption, inflammation and neurological dysfunction that can lead to illness.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0048969700007774>

Dr Sarah Myhill – ME Doctor

‘I have yet to do a fat-biopsy on any patients and find that they are completely free from chemicals.

I now suspect that many patients with CFS and MCS not only react to chemicals outside the body, but may also be reacting to chemicals within their own body-fat.

<https://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners/content/findings/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10051690/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7825391/>



[://www.drmyhill.co.uk/wiki/Detoxing_-_Far_Infrared_Sauna_\(FIRS\)](http://www.drmyhill.co.uk/wiki/Detoxing_-_Far_Infrared_Sauna_(FIRS))

Avoiding Toxins

Avoid in Food

- Artificial additives and colourings
- Artificial sweeteners in food
- Pesticides and herbicides in foods
- These may be toxic to the nervous system and contribute to inflammation

Avoid in the Environment

- Artificial perfumes and chemicals
- Air-fresheners
- Cleaning products
- Plug-in room scents
- Toiletries and makeup.

Studies are increasingly finding links between artificial chemicals and nervous system toxicity, endocrine disruption and other health issues.

Try and use natural products as much as possible for cleaning and for toiletries and make up, which contain less artificial colourings and perfumes.



<https://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners/content/findings/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10051690/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7825391/>

Detox Support

Diet

- Brassicas – cabbage, kale, cauliflower, brussels sprouts contain glucosinolates that support liver detox
- Sulphur – onions, leeks, garlic, Broccoli sprouts – Sulforaphane support liver detox – Sulphation pathway
- Orange vegetables and fruits – carrots, butternut squash, oranges – Beta carotene, antioxidant for liver
- Folate – Vitamin B9 in green leafy vegetables
- Dandelion – leaf and root teas – stimulate digestion and bile
- Fibre – bowel movements
- Water – essential for detox – make sure you drink lots of pure water



Detox Support

Lifestyle

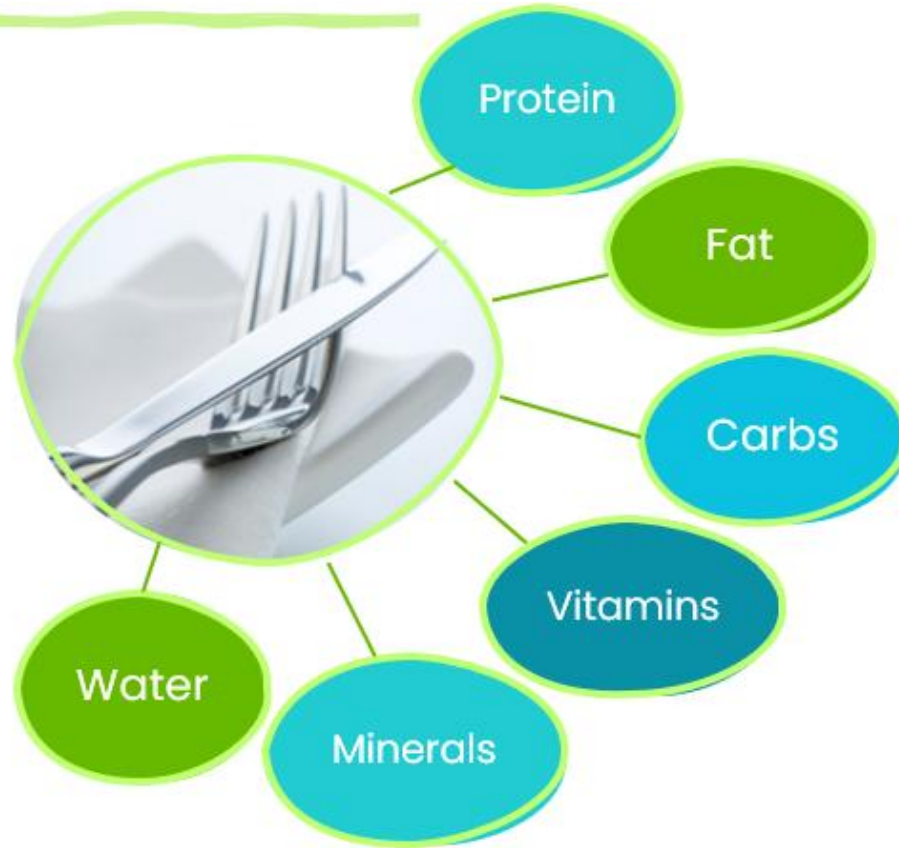
- Epsom Salt Baths – encourage toxins to be eliminated through skin
- Lymphatic drainage - dry skin brushing - support the lymphatic system to drain toxins
- Far Infrared Sauna – eliminate toxins through skin via sweat
- Movement – helps the body eliminate toxins more effectively
- Sleep – Glymphatic drainage in brain



Food and Drink



What is Nutrition?



Food:

Any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink or plants absorb that maintains life and growth.

Nutrient:

A substance that provides nourishment essential for the maintenance of life and growth.

Naturopathic Nutrition:

Food as Medicine. Looking at the medicinal properties of food and understanding the ways in what we eat can either keep us healthy or make us sick.

Looking at each person as an individual, with personalised dietary requirements.

Macro & Micro Nutrients

Our bodies don't make these substances – we get them from food.

Macro Nutrients

- Proteins
- Fats
- Carbohydrates

Micro Nutrients

- Vitamins
- Minerals



“Your body and brain are entirely made from molecules derived from food, air and water”.

Patrick Holford



If we don't eat them, we don't get them! And we become malnourished.

Research on Diet for Chronic Illnesses



Action for ME Research into links between fatigue conditions and dietary changes indicate some people find their symptoms improved after:

- Reducing Gluten
- Eating a generally healthy diet – avoiding processed foods, increasing fruit and vegetables
- Increasing consumption of antioxidant foods
- Avoiding food additives like aspartame (artificial sweeteners) and Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) which is often added to processed foods. Both can have a toxic effect on the nervous system



- 2014 survey by Action for ME found 51% had tried making dietary changes to help them manage their symptoms. Of these, 72% said it was helpful or very helpful

- A 2017 study of people with Fibromyalgia found they all had lower levels of Vitamin D than 'healthy' controls.

<https://www.actionforme.org.uk/get-information/managing-your-symptoms/diet-and-nutrition/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5665736/>

Foods for Mitochondria



Nutrients that support Mitochondrial Function

- B Vitamins – leafy greens, legumes, fish, meat, seeds, liver, dairy, avocado
- CoQ10 – liver, meat, fish, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Vitamin D – mushrooms, fish, egg yolks, liver
- Magnesium – dark chocolate, avocado, fish, nuts, seeds, green leafy veg, bananas
- Water

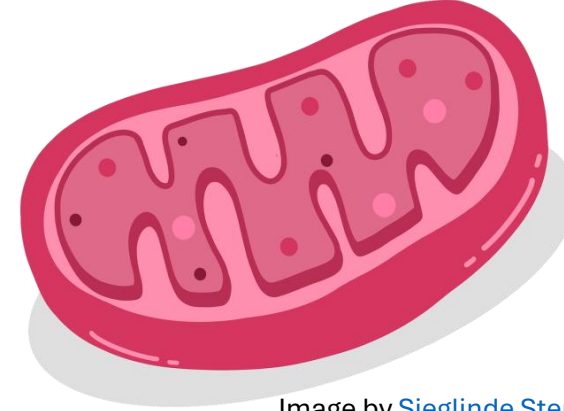


Image by [Sieglinde Sterbling](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Mitochondria use nutrients to make ATP

The process of making ATP is very 'expensive' in terms of nutrients.

If we lack enough nutrients our mitochondria can't make energy

Pro-Inflammatory Foods

We're all eating them!

Trans fats, heated fats, hydrogenated fats

Processed foods

Processed meats

Sugar

Refined carbs – white bread, pasta, rice, cakes etc

Gluten

Dairy

Fizzy drinks

Artificial sweeteners like Aspartame

Artificial flavourings and colourings



Anti-inflammatory Foods

- Fruit and Vegetables contain **phytonutrients**
- Chemicals found in plants that are anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant

- **Green fruits** and vegetables – chlorophyll
- **Red fruits** and vegetables – lycopene
- **Orange fruits** and vegetables – beta carotene
- **Blue fruits** and vegetables – anthocyanins
- **White fruits** and vegetables – sulphur

They fight inflammation and oxidative stress

Eat a rainbow!

<https://askthescientists.com/phytonutrients/>



Drinks

What you drink is just as important as what you eat!

- **Avoid**
- **Sugary drinks**
- **Fizzy Drinks**
- **'Diet' Drinks**
- **These contain artificial sweeteners, sugars, colourings, flavourings**

Artificial sweeteners like those found in these drinks have been shown in research to be linked to

- Cardiovascular Disease
- Diabetes
- Gut dysbiosis
- Inflammation
- DNA Damage

Tap water can contain impurities such as

- Chlorine
- Lead/Copper
- Nitrates
- PFA's?
- Oestrogen
- Drugs

- **Drink**
- **Filtered Water**
- **Herbal Teas**
- **Cucumber Water**
- **Ginger tea**



<https://pureh2o.co.uk/on-tap-the-unwanted-drugs-in-our-water/>

Food Intolerances



A 'healthy' diet is very individual.

People can be experiencing undiagnosed food intolerances
Several foods can provoke inflammation in susceptible people

- Gluten
- Grains
- Dairy
- Eggs
- Additives – E Numbers
- Histamine
- Nightshades
- Oxalates
- Lectins
- Salicylates

Not necessarily bowel symptoms

Can cause systemic issues, fatigue, joint pain, skin issues, neurological issues, migraine, respiratory issues, sleep issues, brain fog, depression, anxiety.



Fibromyalgia, fatigue, IBS, mental health issues, migraine, joint pain, respiratory issues all been linked to intolerances.

Nervous System



Stress and the Nervous System



The Nervous System needs to be in balance to be healthy, and we need to be able to access our 'Rest and Digest' state

Whenever we are in a state of stress, we activate Fight or Flight.

This is a fundamentally unhealthy state long-term.

The stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline damage our health, and prevent the body from being able to recover from illness.

Stress dysregulates the nervous system.

When someone's nervous system is dysregulated, they can't heal.

By reducing stress, we can help people to switch on the rest and digest state, which is the optimal state for healing.



When in rest and digest, the body can:

- Digest and absorb nutrients
- Sleep
- Produce energy
- Perform cellular repair and regeneration
- Fight off viruses and infections
- Detox effectively
- Heal

Stress and Healing

Relaxation time is essential for wellbeing – not self-indulgent.

- Stress causes DNA damage and illness
- Stress increases inflammation
- Stress causes oxidative stress and damage to cells
- Stress impairs mitochondrial function and energy production
- Chronic stress releases cortisol and adrenaline, which prevent healthy processes of digestion, healing and cellular repair, worsening pre-existing conditions.
- Stress prevents the body getting rid of toxins
- Stress suppresses the immune system, leading to new infections, and reactivation of old infections

Studies show that this damage can be reversed by reducing stress, so that the body can recover.



Balance the Nervous System

Mindfulness

Meditation

Hobbies, sports, exercise

Good chemicals – nitric oxide, serotonin, dopamine

Hypnotherapy

Trauma therapy

Lifestyle change

Support networks

Sleep



Sleep for Health

- Poor sleep.....
- Is a stress-state in the body, increasing levels of cortisol
- Promotes obesity – affects hunger and satiety chemicals
- Affects insulin and increases the risk of insulin resistance and Type 2 Diabetes.
- Affects energy levels and brain performance
- Increases pain perception and severity.
- Increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke
- Reduces immune system function
- Provokes inflammation
- Linked to depression and poor mental health



Delta Sleep, between 10pm and 2am is essential for glymphatic drainage which removes toxins from the brain.



What Stops us Sleeping?



 Stress – high cortisol

 Anxiety and worry

 Pain

 Blue light exposure

 Erratic Blood Sugar

 Dietary deficiencies –calcium, magnesium, and vitamins A, C, D, E, and K to be associated with sleep problems.

 Eating too late/digestive activity

 Light in the bedroom (affects melatonin levels)

 Muscle tension

 Lack of exercise

 Stimulants – spices, alcohol, caffeine, nicotine

 Overstimulation – taxing work, exciting films, horror films

Movement



Why is Movement Important?



- Lymphatic drainage - Clearing toxins and immune health
- Blood flow and circulation – heart health
- Bowel movement and gut health
- Regulates blood sugar – reduce risk of Type 2 Diabetes
- Bone density – osteoblasts triggered by movement
- Muscle strength
- Hormesis – cell regeneration
- Joint health – synovial fluid and nutrients pumped in by movement



Movement For Fatigue



Many people with fatigue struggle to exercise, and experience PEM

Pushing to move too much can be dangerous with fatigue

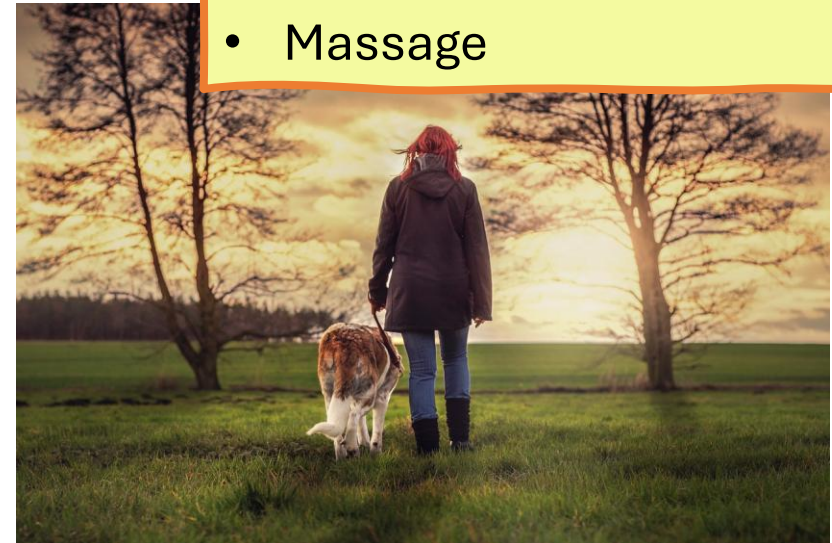
Lack of movement can cause muscle wastage and joint issues and make fatigue worse

Many are caught in a vicious cycle

There is no 'one size fits all' advice – people should only do what they feel able to do.

- Exercise within limits – never 'push through'.
- Listen to your body and do what feels right
- Build up slowly.
- **Pacing** - staying strictly within your limits – not pushing through.
- Doing 50% of what you feel capable of doing. Never use up all their energy because they can't replace it.
- Even small movements each day have benefit.
- Study - 3 seconds of movement per day – 12% increase in muscle mass in 1 month

- Walking
- Yoga (Chair/bed)
- Qigong (chair)
- Swimming
- Pilates
- Physio
- Dance
- Massage



Connection

CONNECTION

Ensuring Adequate
Support Network
Friends
Family
Peer Support



Support Networks

- The human nervous system is wired for co-regulation
- Support is key for people with illness
- Many people lose access to their friends and family when they become ill
- There is little support or understanding in the medical profession
- People become isolated and feel alone
- This has negative health impacts – triggers a stress response
- Compassion, empathy, understanding are essential
- Encouraging self-agency and empowerment



Seek out support networks
Make connections with others
who understand
Make connections with others
who have shared interests
Consciously choose who you
spend time with
Limit your exposure to negative
or toxic people

Purpose

PURPOSE

Hobbies

Fun

Reason to Live

Meaning and Future Goals

Skills, Values, Strengths



What Does Purpose Mean?

Having a sense of Purpose is good for your health!

Purpose means to have :

- A sense of meaning in life
- Contributing to something that matters to us
- Something that connects us to something greater than ourselves
- Something that uses our unique skills, talents, experiences

When we feel a sense of achievement and purpose, it produces good brain chemicals

Endorphins, dopamine, oxytocin, nitric oxide

Research showed that doing something that gives you a sense of purpose in life is associated with an extra 7 years of life!



Image by [Daniel Reche](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Doing something that is meaningful and gives you a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment is essential for health

What Does Purpose Mean?

Purpose can seem like very grand concept, and out of our reach when we live with illness.

It doesn't have to be a very big thing.

Purpose means to have :

- A sense of meaning in life
- Contributing to something that matters to us
- Something that connects us to something greater than ourselves
- Something to look forward to
- Something that makes us feel worthwhile
- Something that makes us feel fulfilled
- Something that uses our unique skills, talents, experiences
- Something that stretches us – positive challenge





Self-Care Wheel

For each area of your life, mark a score between 0-10

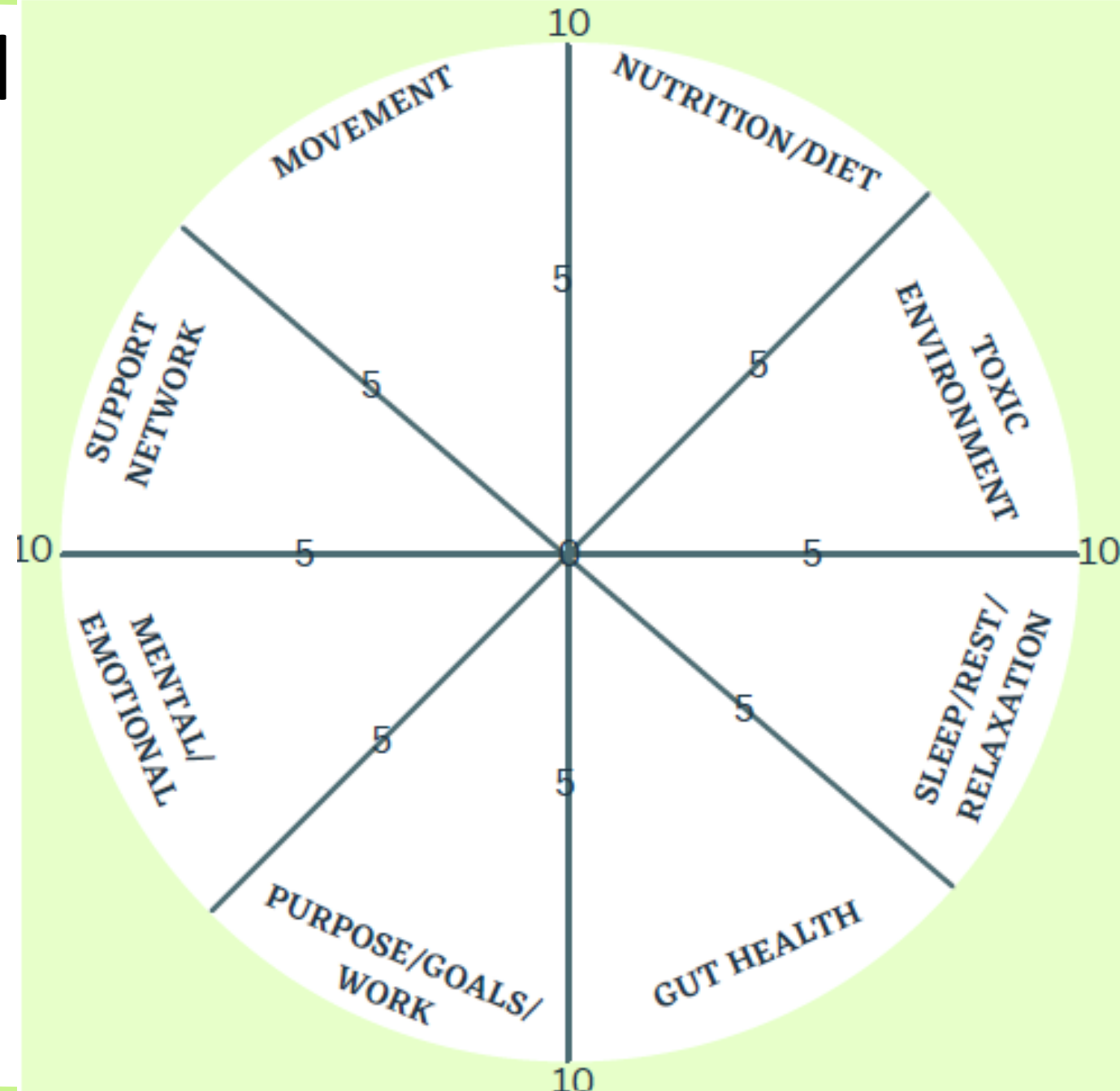
0 – very poor, not where you want it

10 – perfect – just how you would want it to be.

What areas of your self-care are suffering?

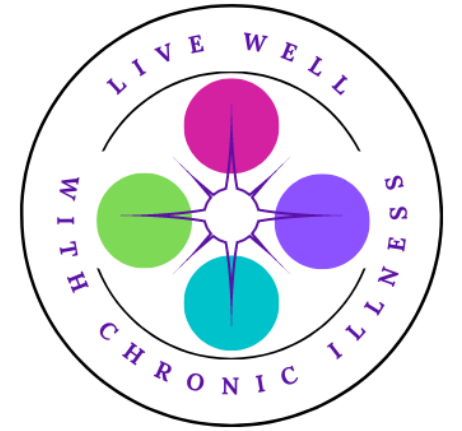
What would it take to improve each score by 1 or 2?

What would the next score up look like?



Summary - Pillars of Health

- Reducing Inflammation
- Exploring deeper for root causes
- Support your Gut Health
- Reduce Toxic burden
- Food and Drink – nourish your body as much as possible
- Reduce Stress and Balance Nervous System
- Promote Restful Sleep
- Movement that is safe – pacing
- Foster a sense of Purpose
- Ensure Support Network



Contacts



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Any Questions?

