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**10 Tips For a
Natural Immune
System**

**How to Have a Healthy
Spiritual Immune System**

**5 Ways Exercise
Boosts the Immune System**

**Top
Foods
for a Strong
Immune System**

**7 Steps To
Immune System
Recovery**

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Immune System

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10 Tips For A Natural Immune System

by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.

Thousands of people fill the stands to watch the game. This is the one game that decides the best football team in the world: the Super Bowl.

It's near the end of the game and the score is close. The center hikes the ball to the quarterback...who hands it off to a half-back...who then throws it to a tight end across the field. Inexplicably, the tight end starts running the wrong way! His own teammate tries to turn him around, but he is faster and gets away...scoring a safety for the other team! It should never happen, but it does. This can happen with the immune system, as well. We call it “autoimmune disease.”

What we call “immunity” makes us think of a system that prevents illness. A better way to consider this is to look at the immune system as the offensive line of all living things. It keeps the other side from getting past them and attacking their quarterback.

All living things have boundaries, as well. Bacteria are not always the ogres that we think they are. We hear of people with a phobia of germs, washing their hands every ten minutes to keep the bugs away. Why? Because they don't want to get sick. However, the reality is that we always have bacteria of all sorts with us. In fact, there are more bacteria with us than there are of our own cells; and, we carry around more DNA from microbes than we do our own!

The immune system is the body's way of keeping microbes on their own side of the line. When everything works well, the system is beautiful!^[2] Bacteria help us to interact with our environment, including digesting and absorbing food, making nutrients for us, and repairing tissue.^[3] However, when bacteria are out of place, they bring inflammation and tissue damage that causes disease.

Teaching in the Intestines

Training the immune cells is remarkably simple. The whole team of cells and proteins only need to learn what is “me” and what is “not me,” like a football player needing to know which way the ball is supposed to go. This training is done primarily in the intestines.

In the intestines, the immune cells are exposed to all sorts of bacteria, yeast, parasites, molds, foods, and environmental antigens that help it know what to expect. Since all of the proteins we make in our body are unique to us, nothing else in the world has the exact same molecules. Our immune system can use this to determine which cells and proteins belong to us, and which are foreign.

Two Different Systems

There are two primary systems of immunity.

1. Innate
2. Acquired

The first does not specifically recognize foreign proteins; your innate immune system looks for abnormal cells. These abnormal cells have names like Natural Killer (NK) cells, and macrophages (big eaters). Essentially, they kill and eat other cells. They completely envelop them, release toxins such as chlorine bleach and hydrogen peroxide to kill them, and then digest them.

These are the cells that clean up the messes when there is trauma or infections. They may form pockets of “pus” when they go in to clean up an infection because the bacteria is making toxins to kill them, such as a staph infection.

They also get rid of all the cancer cells in the large majority of cases. Everyone makes cancer stem cells; only very few actually become cancer because of this part of the immune system. The real question of the existence of cancer is, “Why did that person develop cancer? Why didn’t the NK cells clean it up?” This is one reason it is so important to have an intact, functional immune system.

The second, acquired immunity, is the defense against invaders such as bacterial infections. Acquired immunity is made up of B-cells and T-cells. The T-cells are matured in the thymus gland and have specific receptors for foreign invaders. If the T-cells find a foreign protein and bind to it, they release hormones that cause inflammation, bringing other immune cells to the area to clean up the infection.

The B-cells also have specific binding to foreign invaders, but they make antibodies, which are proteins that circulate in the blood to seek-out and bind to antigens on the infectious agents, inactivating them, and marking them for disposal.

The system is quite amazing and is hundreds of times more complex than what we have discussed. It is an intelligent system: active, and not passive. These cells don’t sit around waiting for an infection to show up. They are constantly monitoring and communicating like a good team. They listen to the coach, take signals from the quarterback, and help each other out on the field. They know the other team. They’ve been trained on the front lines in the thymus gland and in the intestinal system. They know which side they are on!

What Causes Autoimmune Disease?

Though all immune cells are trained which team they are on, sometimes they run the wrong way, and score for the other team! This generally begins in the intestines.

When there is inflammation in the bowels, immune cell training is less specific. The inflammatory process captures some of our own proteins, so the immune system turns on the body and attacks its own proteins. Much like the football player running the wrong way! We call this autoimmune disease, such as thyroid problems, arthritis, lupus, and so forth.

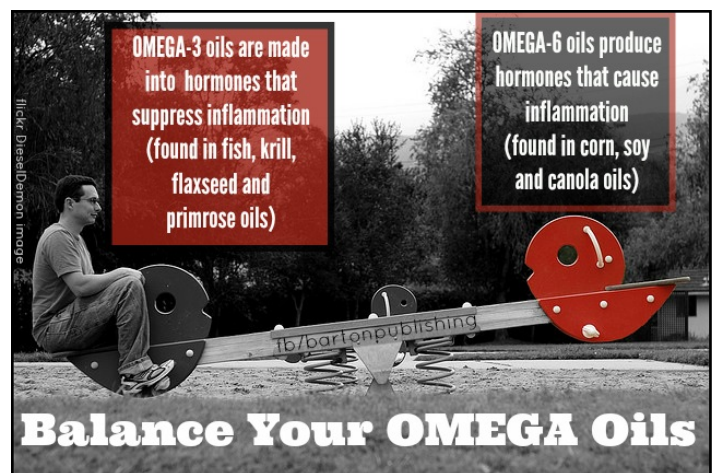
Acquired immunity is so specific it can distinguish between very similar molecules. Many of the common medical tests are based on the specific binding of an antibody to a molecule, such as a drug store pregnancy test. The test line turns red because antibodies attached to the test strip bind to a human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) molecule -- and not any other molecule. A good immune system knows which color jersey they are wearing and will never tackle their own team.

This is how we know that autoimmune disease is not from foreign antigens cross-reacting with our own. It is our own poorly trained immune system. This is why it is so important to have good bowels with the proper bacteria in them.

Influenza and Other Viruses

It happens every time. Johnny came over with a runny nose and now Suzie has a horrible cold! Or, a sick colleague comes to the office and you end up with the flu! It is interesting that exposure to infectious diseases from other people doesn't necessarily mean we get them.

For example, only 40% of those exposed to the Influenza virus by nasal inoculation will develop a symptomatic illness. What about the other 60%? They have a strong immune system that gets rid of the infection quickly, so they get no symptoms. It turns out that the status of our immune system is the most important factor for getting viral illnesses when we are exposed. In fact, immune function is more important than the exposure itself!



Emotional Effects on the Immune System

To prevent illnesses we need to know how the immune system functions AND the things that cause dysfunction.

The immune system is highly affected by our emotions. Multiple studies show how depression, sadness, or even negative thoughts make us more susceptible to disease.^[4]

I have had multiple patients with cancer explain the emotional reasons they were in their state. Remember, the brain is in control of every system of the body. The quarterback calls the plays and the team members obey. The intelligence of the system allows the brain to dictate how it functions.

When we have negative emotions, the immune system is inhibited.^[5]

- Short stressors like a shock or injury have little effect.
- Intermediate stressors such as exams inhibit the immune cells, but not the antibodies, making us more susceptible to the flu.
- But long-term stress inhibits both the cells and antibodies, making us susceptible to all kinds of infections, cancers, or autoimmune diseases.

Good Nutrition

When the body lacks nutrition, the immune system is the first to be downsized so it is important that we get adequate nutrition. While the antioxidant vitamins are very important to prevent damage to the immune system, Vitamin D and A are crucial for making the immune system function.

Vitamin D

There have been many theories of why the flu comes only in winter. It turns out this phenomenon is related to the amount of vitamin D in the body.

Vitamin D is not really a vitamin; it is a hormone made in the body from cholesterol. Cholesterol comes out in our sweat where ultraviolet rays from the sun change it and it is then re-absorbed into the body. It was once believed that vitamin D only prevented Rickets, a disease of lack of calcium in the bones. But vitamin D has effects on every cell in the body, particularly the immune system.

The most important action on the immune function seems to be the effect of vitamin D on macrophages. By activating these cells, the immune system is able to remove any threats that are internal to the cells. These include cancer and viruses. This explains why the flu happens only in the winter!

Vitamin A

Autoimmune disease is rampant in our society. The question for most rheumatologists is not, “Do you have autoimmunity?” but rather, “How much autoimmune disease do you have?” Part of this problem is the maturation and differentiation of the immune cells in the intestines. Vitamin A plays a crucial role in the training of the cells. It’s like the offensive coach, helping the offensive line to protect the players in the back.

Also, vitamin A deficiency is a large cause of mortality in many areas of the world. A lack of vitamin A diminishes the function of both innate and acquired immunity. The macrophages don't eat up infectious debris, the B-cells don't make as much antibody, and the T-cells don't bind to germs. In parts of the world where foods contain scarce amounts of vitamin A, they have a higher infant, child, and pregnant mother mortality due to infectious diseases.[\[6\]](#)

Balance

Balance is another issue of immune function. We are told that we need to take fish oil, or some other "omega-3" to prevent inflammation. However, this is only because our diet consists of ten times too much omega-6 oil. Balancing omega-3 and omega-6 oils affects the immune system to a great degree.

- Omega-6 oils produce the hormones that cause inflammation (found in corn, soy and canola oils).
- Omega-3 oils are made into the hormones that suppress inflammation (found in fish, krill, flaxseed and primrose oils).

If we have too much omega-6, then we tend to be inflamed with arthritis, lupus, heart disease, and so forth.[\[7\]](#) On the other hand, if we have too much omega 3-oil, then we may not be able to respond well to the opposing team. We need balance.

Achieve balance with sufficient quantities of each kind of oil. However, it isn't necessary to fill up with fish or flax oil. All we would need to do is swap-out the omega 6-oils by avoiding corn, soy, and vegetable oils. Instead, we can use olive, grapeseed, or walnut oils. Coconut oil has very little of any essential oils, but is fine to use because it won't increase the omega-6. Also, using grass-fed beef, eggs, and butter makes a difference. Remember, the cow is and produces what it eats. Grass has more omega-3 than omega-6, so we get a good ratio.

Besides oils, balance in other nutrients is important. The best way to achieve this is by taking supplements intermittently. Life works best on feast-famine cycles with all nutrients. By having a lot, the body can take up and use the nutrient, or store it for future use. And then, when there is little intake the metabolism becomes more efficient at absorption and use.

Recommendations for Building a Strong Immune System:

1. Forgive everyone of everything! Don't let past injuries destroy your future.
2. Daily meditation and relaxation time is important.
3. Exercise regularly – an hour of exercise 3 days per week is great!
4. Eat nutritious food with lots of colors: berries, greens, and yellow vegetables.
5. Avoid corn, soy, and vegetable oils.
6. Use olive, coconut, grapeseed, or walnut oils.
7. Don't eat sweets, especially with artificial sweeteners!
8. Do a cleanse once per year, including a modified fast and probiotics, for 20 days.
9. Take a tablespoon of raw cod liver oil three times per week. (Provides vitamins A, D, and omega-3 oils)
10. Take vitamin B12, 1000 mcg once per week.

A team works together to reach their goal. All members are necessary to function at their peak. Everyone needs to be going in the same direction. In the same manner, we cannot neglect our immune system and feel well.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, “Health is the greatest wealth.” If you are sick, it doesn’t matter what else you have. If you take care of your immune system, then your immune system will take care of you.



Dr. Scott D. Saunders, M.D. (Ask-an-MD) is a practicing physician, specializing in preventative health care, who utilizes eclectic health care for the whole family, including conventional, orthomolecular and natural medicine. He is also the medical director of The Integrative Medical Center of Santa Barbara in Lompoc, CA. He went to UCLA medical school and is board certified in family medicine. View natural remedies with Dr. Saunders at: <http://drsaundersmd.com>

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Top Foods for A Strong Immune System

By Amanda Box, N.D

I have some unfortunate news. Maybe you have already heard the truth, or experienced it for yourself.

The truth is...it takes more than an apple a day to keep the doctor away.

Apples are great! Don't get me wrong! They contain vitamins and antioxidants beneficial to our bodies. But it takes more than an apple to stave away sickness.

I like to think that this old proverb is a metaphor. It isn't just about choosing to eat an apple every day, rather choosing a healthy lifestyle! An apple alone can only do so much. Yet, a lifestyle composed of healthy foods can perform miracles by creating a healthy and strong immune system! Strong immunity will keep you out of the doctor's office and enjoying your life!

Immunity and Lack of Nutrition

What you eat can literally make or break your immunity. Chronic disease and illnesses can manifest simply from poor dietary choices. Regardless of weight, race, or gender, making poor food choices will ultimately strip your immune system leaving you susceptible to sickness. From the flu to diabetes, what you eat on a daily basis can truly make all the difference.

Food compromises your immune system in two main ways:

1. Under-consumption of nutrients
2. Over-consumption of anti-nutrients

Sickness with roots in lack of nutrition can be seen all throughout history. For example, diseases like scurvy, rickets, and beriberi are all caused by a lack of vitamins C, D, and B1, respectively. Children and adults in poor underdeveloped countries even today, suffer from sickness and disease caused solely from malnutrition.

The sad and disappointing fact is that although we live in a country overflowing with food, we too suffer from malnutrition! When you think of malnutrition, you probably picture a poor African child with bony limbs and a swollen belly. However, malnutrition looks quite the opposite here in the United States. Many people here that suffer from malnutrition are actually overweight or obese!^[1] This malnutrition does not come from a lack of food. Rather, it is from an over abundance of foods that are either void of nutrition or overflowing with anti-nutrients.

What exactly are anti-nutrients? They are substances that prevent the absorption and utilization of nutrients in the body. They can accomplish this in several different ways.

- Binding with nutrients and preventing their utilization
- Blocking nutrient absorption sites
- Encouraging elimination of nutrients from the body
- Creating imbalances in body systems which lead to improper absorption and utilization
- Destroying beneficial bacteria and enzymes needed for digestion and utilization

Anti-nutrients come in many forms. Though most are chemical based, some anti-nutrients are present in more natural based foods like certain plants.

The most common anti-nutrients are found in:

- *Sugar*: Causes the body to use up vitamins and minerals
- *Wheat*: Contains phytic acid which prevents the absorption of important minerals
- *Artificial Additives* (Artificial Colors, Flavors, and Sweeteners): See below
- *Hydrogenated Oils*: Damage cells and suppress immune system function
- *GMO foods*: Contain enzyme inhibitors that prevent digestion
- *Fluoride*: Blocks the absorption of essential iodine
- *Soy products*: Suppress thyroid function, mineral absorption, and protein digestion
- *Drugs (specifically antibiotics, steroids, and pain relievers)*: Destroy beneficial bacteria, reduce absorption and increase elimination of nutrients.

Though refining foods may make their taste more appealing, it was the popularity of refined foods that brought about malnutrition diseases like beriberi. Beriberi is caused from a lack of vitamin B1 and causes inflammation of the nerves and heart failure. Its prevalence began when refined white rice became the preference over brown rice. Stripping the hull off rice left it void of B1; therefore, leaving thousands deficient in this essential vitamin. The same can be said of many grains, which are now refined. Wheat is the most prominent example.

Refining sugars and grains not only leads to a lack of nutrients, but also a much higher glycemic index causing a rise in blood sugar. Chronic high blood sugar compromises the immune system and can also lead to chronic disease like diabetes.^[2]

Artificial additives often contain chemical components that compromise immunity by damaging cells and initiating unnecessary immune responses throughout the body. Because these additives are artificial, our bodies often recognize them not as food, but as foreign invaders. Consuming these artificial additives on a regular bases can over-stimulate the immune system and lead to autoimmune diseases.^[3]

Always read labels. My rule of thumb is that if you can't pronounce it, then don't eat it. Real food ingredients are easily recognized. But, artificial additives have names that sound like chemical compounds, because that's what they are!

Avoiding anti-nutrient foods is absolutely essential in building and maintaining immunity. Only by absorbing and utilizing essential nutrients, can our body achieve balance. It is this balance that contributes to a healthy and strong immune system!

Super Nutrient Foods

Avoiding processed and refined foods is extremely important in keeping your immune system strong and uncompromised. However, boosting the immune system truly comes from adding nutrient dense foods into your diet. These foods feed your immune system what it needs to stay strong and easily overcome whatever microorganism may try to make its way through your body. They also protect you from cancer and chronic diseases by increasing killer cell activity and lowering inflammation in the body.

There is a lot of debate about what foods are actually more “super.” There always seems to be a new miracle food on the market that claims to cure you of all your ailments. Although almost all of these foods are wonderful, they alone cannot do it all. Just as I said about the apple, no one food alone has all your body's needs.

It is important to note that nutrition doesn't just come from vitamins and minerals. There are several other substances that are crucial for the health of your body and are key for maintaining a strong immune system! Some of these substances include:

- Probiotics (friendly bacteria)
- Enzymes
- Antioxidants
- Fatty acids

So what does an immune boosting diet really look like? First and foremost, it is void of processed and fast foods that are brimming with anti-nutrients. Instead, it includes these wonderful foods listed below, which build your immune system from the inside out!



Fermented Foods

Interestingly enough, 80% of your immune system is located in your digestive tract. Every single food that travels through your gut has the potential to affect your immune system by harming you or helping you. Many immune deficiencies and autoimmune diseases have their roots in a toxic, out-of-balance gut.

Consuming foods that contain probiotic bacteria is the best way to maintain a healthy balance in the digestive system. This contributes directly to a strong immune system. Probiotics neutralize and crowd out pathogenic bacteria, aid in the production of antibodies, and prevent inflammation.

Fermented foods contain naturally derived probiotic bacteria. Many different cultures all across the world have included fermented foods in their diet for thousands of years. Koreans eat Kimchi with every meal, the Chinese eat Natto, and the Germans have sauerkraut. These cultures understand that fermented foods benefit digestion and increase overall health.

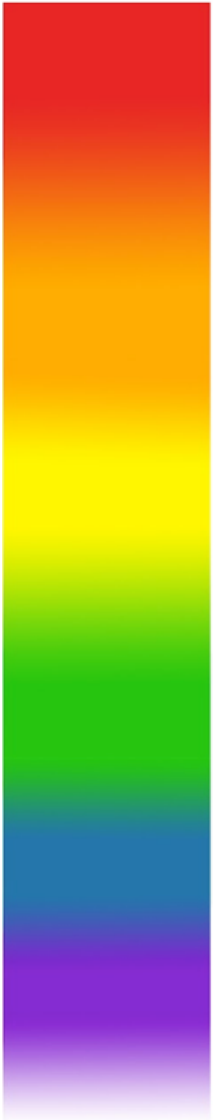
Try including at least 2 servings of fermented foods into your diet each day. Some great choices include:

- Sauerkraut (vinegar free)
- Kombucha tea
- Kefir
- Yogurt
- Fermented pickles (Bubbie's Brand or [make your own homemade fermented pickles](#))

Colorful Fruits and Vegetables

It really is important that you eat a rainbow of colors in your diet. Many people stick to a couple of their favorite fruits and veggies, but miss out on the immune boosting properties by expanding their palette. Don't get in a rut eating the same few things at every meal. Try new vegetables and fruits! The more colorful they are, the more antioxidants and nutrients they contain! The chart below explains the nutrients contained in fruits and vegetables according to their color.

NUTRITION BY COLOR



red: contains nutrients like lycopene, ellagic acid, queroetin, and hesperidin. These nutrients reduce the risk of cancer, lower blood pressure, reduce tumor growth, and reduce cholesterol levels, scavenge harmful free-radicals and suport joint tissue in cases of arthritis.

orange: contains beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, flavenoids, lycopene, potassium and vitamin C. These nutrients reduce age-related macular degeneration and the risk of cancer, lower cholesterol and blood presure, promote collagen formation and healthy joints, fight harmful free radicals, encourage alkaline balance, repair damaged DNA and work with mangesium and calcium.

yellow: contains beta-crytothanxin and the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin which support intercellular communication, prevent heart disease, reduce the risk of cataracts, and age related macular degeneration.

green: contains chlorophyl, fiber, lutein, zeaxanthin, magnesium, calcium, folate, vitamin C, and beta-carotenes which inhibit the action of carcinogens and promote healthy bodily function.

blue/purple: contains phytochemicals such as anthocyanins and phenolics which are powerful antioxidants which help reduce the risk of diseases such as cancer, heart disease, alzheimers, improve memory and cell communication, and slow the process of aging.

white: contains beta-glucans, EGCG, ESG, flavonoids, allicin, and lignans which activate natural kiler B and T cells, support immunity and balance hormone levels.

Coconut

Coconuts have gotten a lot of attention in the last few years, and for good reason! Coconuts contain unique fatty acids that do wonders for your immunity. The presence of lauric acid and caprylic acid in coconuts are unique in that they are also found in human breast milk. These two fatty acids have the ability to combat bacteria, fungi, and viruses. This is one reason why breast milk is so wonderful for keeping babies healthy! Now, you can get those same benefits by consuming coconut products!

Coconut oil and coconut milk contain the highest levels of lauric and caprylic acid amongst all the coconut food products. You can use coconut oil in baking, sautéing, frying and much more! Coconut milk makes a great dairy substitute and is great in soups, gravies, and smoothies!

Garlic

One little clove of garlic packs quite the sickness fighting punch! Garlic contains potent antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal properties that your body will never build up a resistance to. This makes it wonderful for daily consumption! Garlic makes some of the most boring dishes absolutely delicious. Add to your ground beef, your chicken and your veggie side dishes for more flavors and an immune boost!

Green Tea

A recent study was published that revealed green tea boosts the immune system by increasing its ability to fight bacteria, fungi, and even cancer!^[4]

It also aids in decreasing inflammation and lowering stress levels in the body, which are two of the leading causes of illness. Matcha green tea is the most potent form of green tea and comes in a powder that is a vibrant green color. You can drink the tea plain, or add milk or a dairy substitute to make a green tea latte! Some even add matcha to their daily smoothie.

Turmeric

This brightly colored golden spice is what gives curry its signature color. Turmeric contains a substance called curcumin, which is a super powerful antioxidant. Curcumin has the ability to neutralize free radicals, lower inflammation, and even reduce pain levels in the body. Turmeric can be added to vegetables and main dishes as well as added to drinks like the Golden Milk recipe below.

One of the easiest ways to incorporate these immune boosting foods into your diet is to include them together in a smoothie! Smoothies are great for breakfast, and also when you're feeling run down and on the verge of getting sick. Pumping your body full of nutrition can give your body what it needs to overcome seasonal illness and even chronic disease! This smoothie contains immune boosting probiotic bacteria, microorganism busting fatty acids, and antioxidants that lower stress and inflammation. Feel free to experiment with the fruits and vegetables you add by coming up with new and exciting combinations!

Immune Boosting Smoothie

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup unflavored yogurt
- 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1 cup raw spinach
- 1/2 cup frozen berries
- 1 tsp. matcha tea (optional)
- 20 drops of Stevia

Directions:

Blend all the ingredients in your blender and enjoy!



This warm, soothing milk is perfect for cold and flu season. It contains both coconut milk and turmeric, which combine to form a potent immune boosting elixir. It can be served either savory or sweet depending on your taste preferences.

Golden Milk

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of milk (or substitute coconut milk)
- 1 teaspoon dried turmeric
- 1 teaspoon dried ginger (optional)
- Sprinkle of black pepper (for savory option only)
- Sprinkle of sea salt (for savory option only)
- 1 tsp. honey
- Omit black pepper and sea salt if you prefer sweet milk.

Directions:

1. Place milk in a saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add turmeric, ginger, and pepper and stir well.
3. Let the milk begin to simmer – small bubbles will form on the surface.
4. Continue to stir.
5. Turn off heat, remove saucepan from burner and cover. Allow to infuse for 10 minutes.
6. Serve warm^[5]

Incorporating nutrient rich foods into your diet will help you achieve maximum immunity and greatly decrease your risk of illness and disease. If you have a chronic disease or illness, take heart. Adding these nutrient dense foods into your diet can often decrease symptoms and in some cases eliminate them altogether! Try our Immune Boosting Smoothie and Golden Milk to give your body that extra boost. Proper nutrition can truly be the miracle you're looking for!!



Amanda Box is a Traditional Naturopath and a graduate of Clayton College of Natural Health. She's been in the health and wellness industry for over 12 years and currently practices naturopathic consulting in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Her passion is helping others achieve wellness of the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. If you don't have a good local naturopathic practitioner to turn to for your personal needs, Amanda does phone consultations! She can help you with weight loss, detox/cleansing, acute and chronic illnesses, skin and body care, grocery shopping, pantry overhauls, and more! Visit her blog "My Life in a Healthnut Shell" at: <http://amandabox.blogspot.com/>

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7 Steps To Immune System Recovery

By Amanda Box, N.D.

Has sickness left you worn out and hung out to dry? Do you feel like, no matter what, every year you just can't seem to escape the seasonal cold or flu? Maybe you suffer from a chronic autoimmune disorder that leaves you in a state of constant exhaustion and pain. Is it possible to intervene in this process and make your immune system stronger? Yes and I am going to show you how!

Our bodies have a built-in complex system that is designed to recognize and destroy foreign invaders. This system is so incredibly effective that it literally saves our lives on a daily basis by eradicating viruses, bacteria, cancer cells, and so much more. It is always working as we go about our daily lives, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Most of us don't notice our immune system until it fails to stop a sickness before it starts. Once we feel that tickle in our throat, the nasal congestion, or that achy feeling in our body, we become disappointed thinking that, once again, our immune system has failed us.

But, what if it is the other way around? In most cases, we are responsible for impairing our immune system! We often give our immune system some of the worst working conditions possible, yet still expect everything to run smoothly. So many of us fail to give our body what it needs to have a healthy, well-functioning immune system!

The 7 Steps to Immune System Recovery

There are 7 essential steps to a powerful and strong immune system. Making these steps a central part of your lifestyle can pull you out of sickness and into recovery. These 7 steps will boost your immune system and give you an overall sense of well-being. When these important steps to immune recovery are not implemented, a weak immune system is often the result.

Weakened immunity leaves you vulnerable to sickness and disease. Ignoring these important aspects of health and wellness can also send your body into an imbalanced state. It is this state of imbalance that can cause your immune system to overreact and attack your own body! This self-destructive process is behind autoimmune disorders like M.S., fibromyalgia, and lupus.

Take each one of these 7 steps into account. Each and every step is extremely crucial for immune system recovery. Omitting even one step can make all the difference in truly restoring immunity throughout your body.



1. Adequate Sleep

Lack of sleep is a very common factor in those with compromised immune systems. The direct correlation between lack of sleep and low immunity has been acknowledged through recent studies. [1] Sleep is the time during which your body maximizes the chance to heal and repair. Our body's immune system functions best at night because it doesn't have to compete for energy when the body is at rest. This is often why fevers spike at night. The immune system is strong and fighting the best it can to kill the foreign invader by increasing the body's core temperature.

When you deprive your body of this essential restoration time, the result is compromised immune function. T-cell function decreases and triggers inflammation in the body when you are not rested.

Boost immunity by going to bed before midnight and getting at least 6-8 hours of rest. A regular exercise plan also improves sleep. If you struggle going to sleep, start your sleep routine earlier. Also, supplements like melatonin, L-tryptophan, and GABA can help facilitate a more restful and deep sleep.

2. Reducing Stress

Stress is the #1 cause of disease, bar none. It tops the chart at being the root behind 99% of all disease! [2] Stress puts a burden on every single system in the body, including the immune system. [3] It has also been well documented that cortisol, the hormone released during stress, can significantly lower the immune system if chronically elevated.

Prolonged stress alters the effectiveness of cortisol to regulate the inflammatory response. As a result, immune cells become insensitive to cortisol's regulatory effect. In turn, runaway inflammation promotes the development and progression of many diseases.

I am one who can testify to stress's effect on immunity. I consider myself a healthy individual who rarely gets sick. However, if I let stress or anxiety take over my week, I begin to feel run down and sometimes end up battling a cold or sinus infection. I have experienced this cycle enough times that I now take every precaution I can to lower my stress. I have found that lowering stress is more effective at preventing sickness than immune boosting supplements like vitamin C or garlic.

Autoimmune diseases like fibromyalgia have their roots in stress related causes like emotional trauma. Situations like divorce, loss of a loved one, or a loss of a job can be so traumatic, that a disease process is triggered in the body.

Stress encompasses all things emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Remember, even what you eat can put stress on your body. This is just another reason why a healthy diet is so important to boosting your immune system.

3. Healthy Diet

You are what you eat. If you eat unhealthy, you will be unhealthy.

As previously mentioned, unhealthy foods put unneeded stress on the body. Fast foods and processed foods contain toxic chemical ingredients that your immune system often recognizes as foreign invaders. This overstimulation of the immune system can sometimes trigger autoimmune reactions in the body. This is often common in the gut and can lead to bowel diseases like ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. These diseases begin because your colon becomes the site of a constant allergic reaction. As time passes, the inflammation and immune response leads to intense damage and pain.

Diet also plays an important role in providing the nutrition needed to keep the immune system strong. You have to feed your immune system what it needs to thrive and function properly. Vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fatty acids are all important nutrients that are essential for immune function.

Quit eating fast foods and processed foods and start preparing your meals from scratch. Eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables and stay away from sugar! Sugar strips your immune system leaving it weak and vulnerable! The *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* published a study that found the ability of white blood cells to kill bacteria is significantly lowered for up to 5 hours after eating 100 g of sugar![\[4\]](#)

4. Exercise

Research has shown that sedentary people take twice as many sick days a year than those who exercise regularly.[\[5\]](#)

Though no one knows exactly how exercise boosts immunity, studies have proven it has a direct correlation. Many believe this connection has to do with exercise's ability to oxygenate the blood and push white blood cells through the body at a faster rate.

Increasing your heart rate during exercise also helps to raise your core body temperature. This raise in body temp can kill bacteria or viruses in the body. Exercise's ability to lower stress in the body is also a fantastic reason to adopt the habit of physical activity.

Exercise lowers cortisol levels thereby lowering your stress and helping you to sleep better at night! All the more reason why exercise is great for immunity!

You don't have to exercise an hour everyday to reap the benefits of increased immunity. Something as simple as taking a brisk walk for 20-30 minutes can get your heart pumping.

5. Reducing the use of Pharmaceutical Drugs

The overuse of antibiotics has wreaked havoc on the immune systems of millions of people across the nation. Though antibiotics can act as a miracle for certain bacterial infections, their overuse has led to the formation of antibiotic resistant bacteria like MRSA.^[6]

One danger of antibiotics is that they don't distinguish between good and bad bacteria when they are in the body. This often leads to a depletion of good flora in the gut. When the balance of the gut is compromised, it leaves us susceptible to viruses, bacteria, and fungi that otherwise would not be a problem. The side-effect of lowered levels of beneficial flora is behind some of the worst opportunistic infections like C-diff.^[7]

It is very important to only take antibiotics when absolutely necessary. They have no beneficial effect for viral infections and can actually lower your immunity making the infection last even longer!

Other pharmaceutical drugs also contribute to lowered immunity. Corticosteroids may work well for inhibiting allergic reactions, but their long-term effects can leave your immune system damaged and weak. The CDC even warns against the side-effects of these medications stating they can leave the body susceptible to fungal infections like candida, [*Pneumocystis pneumonia*](#), and [Histoplasmosis](#)!^[8]

There are many natural alternatives to both antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medication. Some of my favorites include oregano oil and colloidal silver for eradicating bacteria. Also, curcumin from turmeric acts as a very powerful anti-inflammatory and alternative to corticosteroids without the side-effects.

5. Maintain a Healthy Gut

Eighty percent (80%) of your immune system resides in your gut, making it extremely important in immune system strength and recovery.^[9] As I already mentioned, antibiotics can damage your gut by killing off beneficial probiotic bacteria. This leaves the gut susceptible to overgrowth of toxic bacteria and fungi like candida. These toxic microbes can damage the intestinal wall and create something called Leaky Gut Syndrome.

Leaky Gut Syndrome is a condition where the walls of the intestine become damaged and permeable. Tiny molecules from our food can pass through this permeable intestine and into the bloodstream. The immune system recognizes these proteins as foreign invaders and launch an attack that creates immune responses that range from headaches to skin rashes. Because this

immune response can occur systemically, autoimmune diseases like Celiac, arthritis, and psoriasis can also result.

Keeping your gut healthy involves staying away from foods and medications that damage the gut lining as well as eating foods that promote balance. Some of the best ways to maintain a healthy gut are:

- Avoiding antibiotics
- Eliminating processed foods and GMO foods (contain chemicals that damage the gut) [clean 15 dirty dozen insert]
- Avoid high allergen foods like wheat, corn, and soy
- Incorporate fermented foods into your diet (yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut)
- Take a strong probiotic supplement daily

6. Preventing Dehydration

I am constantly surprised by the amount of people who simply don't drink enough water. Millions of people are in a state of dehydration on a daily basis and don't even know it! Inadequate water intake prevents the body from eliminating toxins from the body. This leaves these toxins in the body circulating in the system which causes even more damage. Also, bacteria and viruses can grow and multiply if not eliminated frequently. For example, what would normally be flushed out of the bladder can multiply and become a full-fledged UTI if your water intake is too low or infrequent. Water flushes body toxins out of them body which prevents these types of infections.

Water also helps to oxygenate our blood, which keeps our immune cells strong and healthy. It is also a crucial part of keeping our lymph system working. The lymph system is important for circulating white bloods from the thymus throughout the body to remove toxins from the blood.

Proper hydration is also important to keep our eyes, nose, and mouth moist. Bacteria grow at a faster rate in dry cavities. Also, a lack of moisture can cause irritation and possible inflammation.

A good rule of thumb is to always check your urine color. If it is dark or bright yellow, you aren't drinking enough water. Your urine should be light yellow or clear. Staying hydrated will also help you sleep better and increase your energy during the day. Keep a water cup with you at all times. I can assure you that the more you drink water, the more you will crave it!

7. Sun Exposure

Vitamin D is one of the most important vitamins for our immune system. However, the recent push for sunscreen and decreased sun exposure has left many of you deficient in vitamin D. Vitamin D is vital for the function of immune cells in our body. T cells cannot activate and become killer cells without the presence of vitamin D. Without vitamin D available in the body, they will remain inactive, therefore unable to do their job at killing pathogens!

Many people feel tired, sluggish, and have depleted immune systems simply from a lack vitamin D! I recommend getting your blood tested for vitamin D if you feel like you may be at risk. A healthy level of at least 60 ng/ml is best for healthy immunity.

Boosting vitamin D levels is as easy as going out into the sun for 20 minutes a day with exposed skin. You can also take vitamin D3 during the winter months for an extra boost. Taking 35 IU per lb. of body weight is a great daily dosage when the weather is not permitting.

If you are tired of a weak and worn out immune system, then take the time to restore its efficiency. It is an intricate system that needs both our care and attention. When you take the time to incorporate the 7 steps of immune system restoration, you will literally be taking your health back into your hands. Your resistance to disease will increase, you will ward off colds and flu, and your overall vitality will skyrocket! Begin today and step by step, take back your immune system and your health!



Amanda Box is a Traditional Naturopath and a graduate of Clayton College of Natural Health. She's been in the health and wellness industry for over 12 years and currently practices naturopathic consulting in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Her passion is helping others achieve wellness of the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. If you don't have a good local naturopathic practitioner to turn to for your personal needs, Amanda does phone consultations! She can help you with weight loss, detox/cleansing, acute and chronic illnesses, skin and body care, grocery shopping, pantry overhauls, and more! Visit her blog "My Life in a Healthnut Shell" at: <http://amandabox.blogspot.com/>

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5 Ways Exercise Boosts the Immune System

By Rob Fischer

From a medical standpoint we are truly fortunate. For the most part, our society is free from the dread diseases of the past like the black plague, cholera, and smallpox that decimated populations, sometimes killing off whole communities. Many of those deadly diseases are either nearly extinct or very treatable today.

But a different variety of diseases is plaguing us today and more often than not, they are on the rise. Some within the medical community refer to these diseases as “immunity rot,” “the new morbidity” or “the diseases of lifestyle.” That’s because, “These ailments come as a result of our bad habits and poor choices,” according to Dr. Richard A. Swenson, MD.^[1]

Simply put, our lifestyles consist of extremes:

- Se sleep too little
- We eat too much
- We exercise too little
- And we have too much stress

All this comes to bear on our health.

Obesity and diabetes are growing at alarming rates in the US. Heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer’s and a whole host of other lifestyle disorders are sweeping the nation, becoming all too common. We may be living *longer*, but with less *vitality* and *quality* of life.

Exercise is one of the keys to reversing this downward health spiral in our lives. In fact, exercise is a primary factor in building our immune system to ward off those diseases of lifestyle.

Exercise Boosts our Immune Systems in at Least 5 Ways

1. Exercise is necessary for overall physical and mental health.

Our bodies were created for movement. The Johns Hopkins Medical Center reports, “Physical inactivity has clearly been shown to be a risk factor for cardiovascular disease and other conditions” including:^[2]

- High blood pressure
- Coronary heart disease
- Feelings of anxiety and depression
- Risk of some types of cancer
- Type 2 diabetes

Vigorous exercises like running, swimming, walking fast, cycling hard may add years to your life according to various studies conducted in Europe.^[3]

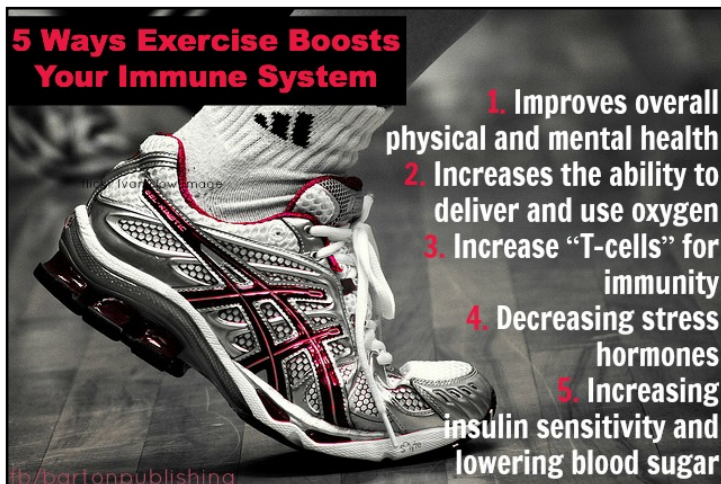
2. Regular aerobic exercise increases the body’s ability to deliver and use oxygen.

Oxygen is the enemy of disease and the friend of healthy cells. Lack of oxygen in the bloodstream due to physical inactivity is a common factor in asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and the variations of COPD.^[4]

Insufficient oxygen in the blood has also been linked to virtually every major category of illnesses including: the development of cancer, heart conditions, problems with the intestinal tract, respiratory disease, joint problems, sinus issues, yeast infections, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and sexual dysfunction.

3. Physical exercise has been shown to increase the “T-cells” or immune cells in the body.

T-cells are the cells that attack bacteria and viruses. Exercise increases the number and aggressiveness of these immunity cells as much as 50-300%.^[7]



For this reason, those who exercise regularly generally get fewer colds and flus. When they do get sick, their illness tends to be less intense than for those who are sedentary. Moderate exercise when you have a cold may also help you get over it sooner. But you have to listen to your body and not overdo it.^[9]

The increase in T-cells resulting from exercise also significantly improves and speeds up the healing process in many cancer patients.

4. Physical exercise boosts the immune systems by decreasing the stress hormones in the body.

The body's natural response to stress of nearly any kind is to secrete stress hormones like adrenalin and cortisol. These stress hormones are known to lower the immune system.^[12]

Other than avoiding stress altogether (which is nigh unto impossible) the best way to rid the body of these stress chemicals is through physical exercise.

5. Exercise boosts the immune system by increasing insulin sensitivity in the cells and lowering blood sugar.

Sugar causes inflammation. Physical exercise increases the body's ability to transport and metabolize sugar, getting it out of our system.^[13] And by maintaining healthy levels of blood sugar, we avoid the horrible complications often associated with diabetes like heart and kidney disease, neuropathy, blindness, and Alzheimer's.

Keys to Making Exercise a Habit

Yet, we often struggle to make regular physical exercise part of our lifestyle.

The experts agree that a routine of 30-45 minutes of sustained exercise like brisk walking, running, bicycling, swimming, etc. three to four days per week is what it takes.^[14]

There are several things you can do to make regular exercise a part of your lifestyle:

1. Find an activity that you enjoy. Make it fun! If you're going to walk, go somewhere that is enjoyable. If you have a dog, take your dog with you.
2. Choose an exercise that is practical and easy for you to engage in. If you have to travel 20 miles to find a swimming pool, then swimming may not be the best option for you. Integrating a brisk walk in the early morning, over lunch, or in the evening can be a great exercise to begin with.
3. Engage the help of a friend or partner to exercise with you. This one practice can often make or break your resolve.
4. Start slowly if you haven't been exercising regularly. Don't try to go out and run six miles the first day. You may injure yourself, or at the very least be very sore and discouraged the next day.
5. Once you establish a routine, vary it for more enjoyment. For example, in the summer I alternate between hiking and bicycling, and I have several different routes to take with each. In the winter, I toggle between cross-country skiing, hiking and snowshoeing.
6. Purchase at least the minimum of the right equipment to engage in your exercise. Beyond the obvious physical factors involved in owning the right gear, there's also a psychological sense of satisfaction that comes along with it.

7. Set small goals and reward yourself for hitting them.
8. When you fail to meet an exercise appointment for one or more days, don't let it derail you. Make tomorrow a new day to start fresh.
9. When you travel, think ahead about what you need to take with you and how, where and when you can exercise. It can be an adventure to walk or run in a new city, or on the beach, or in a forest you've never explored.
10. Learn to listen to your body. Sometimes exercising can bring on minor aches and pains that we would not have otherwise experienced. Learn to distinguish between a pain that requires a day or two of rest and one that will go away if you continue your exercise.
11. Stay hydrated and eat in a healthy way that will support your new exercise routine.
12. Get a good night's sleep! A regular routine of exercise will not only help you sleep, but getting plenty of rest will enhance your workouts.

If you're not already engaged in a regular exercise routine, make plans to start one this week!

And let me leave you with this quote from Ellen DeGeneres, "My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She's ninety-seven now, and we don't know where the heck she is."



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master's degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.

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How to Have A Healthy Spiritual Immune System

By Rob Fischer

On July 2, 2014, Louis Zamperini, a great American hero, died at age 97 in Los Angeles. Louis Zamperini was an Olympic runner for the US, but that's not primarily what he's known for. Instead, he is most remembered as a WWII veteran who survived--not only 47 days on a tiny rubber raft in the Pacific--but also his capture and endurance in a Japanese prisoner of war camp known as Execution Island.

In 2010, author, Laura Hillenbrand published the story of Louis Zamperini in the book, *Unbroken*. On Christmas day, 2014, the movie *Unbroken* will be released in theaters across the nation. [View the *Unbroken* trailer here.](#)

Louis Zamperini's story is one of the most inspiring I've ever read. He's the kind of person you want to be like. Yet, few of us will ever have to contend with the rigors of survival at sea or endure the horrors of a prisoner of war death camp. By contrast, we might even feel ashamed at the relatively puny things that we struggle with by comparison. Yet, these things are so common in life and they can destroy us if we're not prepared for them.

Our culture today seems to be preoccupied with physical health and well-being. It is noble to desire and drive towards maintaining good health. But many of the struggles, trials, suffering, and even our own foibles can undermine our health regardless of how well we eat or how much we exercise.

Holistic health--the health of the whole person: body, mind and spirit--involves far more than mere physical health. And failure to attend to our spiritual well-being can cause great harm to our physical and mental health.

There is a strong link between our spiritual health and our physical and mental health. Consider the following words of wisdom:

“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” -- Proverbs 14:30^[1]

“Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” -- Proverbs 16:24

“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” -- Proverbs 17:22

For the remainder of this article, I'd like to focus on our spiritual health.

Diseases of the Spirit

The diseases of the spirit are different in kind than those of the mind or body. But the diseases of the spirit are no less destructive and even deadly. I see two general kinds of diseases of the spirit.

1. Internal diseases of the spirit

Internal diseases of the spirit are those spiritual diseases to which we are predisposed. We find ourselves falling victim to these diseases at times even when we sincerely desire to avoid them. Some of these diseases of the spirit include: anger, rage, envy, jealousy, bitterness, unforgiveness, hate, self-centeredness, and self-indulgence.

We can categorize those diseases as *sin*. We have all been infected with the sin disease. We inherited it from our parents and they from theirs and so on. No one had to teach us to do wrong. We are inclined to do so even though we might detest it and seek to remove it from our lives.

“Who can say, ‘I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?’” -- Proverbs 20:9

For instance, if we harbor bitterness toward someone who has harmed us--no matter how trivial or serious--and we withhold forgiveness from them, we are harming our own health. Someone has said, “Refusal to forgive others is like taking poison ourselves while hoping the offending person will die.”

In 1950, Louis Zamperini returned to Japan to seek out his tormentors from his POW camp days and forgive them. Louis later wrote, “I think the hardest thing in life is to forgive. Hate is self-destructive. If you hate somebody, then you're not hurting the person you hate; you're hurting yourself. It's a healing, actually, it's a real healing...forgiveness.”

But when we allow these diseases to take root in our lives and grow like cancer, we become “carriers” of these diseases infecting others around us.

2. External diseases of the spirit

External diseases of the spirit are attacks on our person that come from outside of us. These can include all kinds of hardships, sufferings, and circumstances beyond our control. Examples of an external attack on our spirit might be the diagnosis of a physical disease like cancer, experiencing a traumatic natural disaster, or a being hit by a drunk driver. Mere physical or mental health is

insufficient to get us through some of these trials that come our way. We need to be armed with spiritual vitality as well.

Sometimes these external assaults on our spiritual health can result in a flare up of the internal diseases of the spirit. For instance, something as minor as a flat tire can set us off into a rage, making everyone around us “pay” for what happened to us.

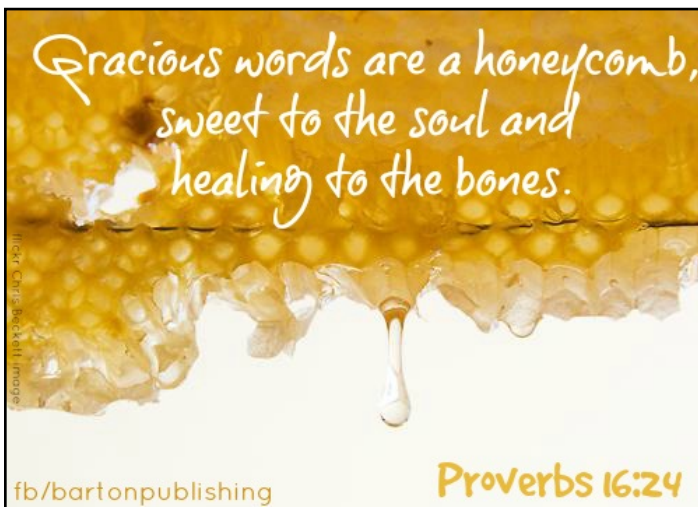
The physical and emotional stress and discord that such a diseased response causes has far reaching effects on our health and that of others. This is why it’s so important that we cultivate spiritual health.

It’s important for us to recognize that while we cannot necessarily control whether we had that flat tire, We are truly “diseased” when we think that the event itself is the *cause* of our response. It’s up to us to respond to those situations in a healthy manner.

Symptoms of Spiritual Illness

Symptoms of these spiritual sicknesses can include any or all of the following:

- Apathy about life in general
- An attitude that “It’s all about me!”
- Idolatry--living for and ascribing ultimate worth to something or someone who is less than divine. For instance, there’s nothing wrong with pursuing a great career. But when we live solely for that career and allow it to define who we are, such action is debasing and demeaning of God and us. Think of how puny it would be to merely refer to Louis Zamperini as an Olympic runner. Instead, look at what God did in his life and through him for others! You are much, much more than that which your career defines you as.
- Lack of a moral compass--our conscience can become twisted and perverted. We need a higher standard.
- No lofty purpose for living. Viktor E. Frankl, Nazi concentration camp survivor wrote, “Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how'.”
- Repeating sin patterns like anger, selfishness, lying, deceit, gossip, etc.



Removing the Root Cause of Spiritual Illness

Before talking about building up our immune systems, we need to ensure that we are taking steps toward eliminating the root cause of spiritual disease instead of merely dealing with symptoms. Sin, or going our own way away from God, is the root cause of all spiritual disease.

All of us sin and have sinned--But God, out of His great love for us, sent His Son Jesus to pay the penalty of our sin on our behalf and reconcile us to Himself.

God asks us to believe Him and accept His gracious gift and free mercy. He extends us forgiveness through Christ. The question is whether we will humbly receive His free gift or spurn and reject Him.

Boosting our Spiritual Immune Systems

Once we have dealt with the root cause of our spiritual sickness, we can begin to focus on boosting our spiritual immune system. Let me offer three ways to do this:

1. Develop a healthy spiritual mindset.

God made this very simple for us. Developing a healthy spiritual mindset begins and ends with trusting that God loves you unconditionally--period! With the knowledge that He loves you, love Him back and love others. This prescription is not necessarily *easy*, but it is *simple*. Following this prescription leads to a life filled with peace and joy. We also arrive at the end of life knowing that we've left a legacy for others. We've made a difference.

2. Deepen your relationship with God.

Get to know Him and His character and allow Him to transform you. We get to know Him better by engaging in practices like reading the Bible (His Word), praying (conversation with Him), spending time alone with Him in solitude, worshiping Him, etc. It is by spending time with Him that He changes us. For in His presence we cannot remain unchanged. As we spend time with Him, we take on God's character. We become more loving, patient, gracious, merciful, kind, just, truthful, faithful, etc.

3. Spend time with spiritually healthy people.

This is important for several reasons. First, we become like those with whom we spend time. Second, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. That is, we can accomplish more with others and often we cannot do what we need to do alone. Third, the nature of the changes that God wants to bring about in us are chiefly relational. We cannot grow relationally apart from the input and help of other people. We spur each other on toward love and good deeds.^[2]

On the flip side, the Scripture warns, "Do not be misled: bad company corrupts good character."^[3] We have to approach this strategy in all humility, however, knowing that we all sin. But there's a difference between someone who is seeking to abandon their sin and another person who gives themselves to their sin with abandon.

Surround yourself with people who are pursuing relationship with God and actively cultivating their spiritual health. And reach out to those in love and care who do not yet seek or love God.

What are you doing to ensure your spiritual health? Vibrant health is so much more than a healthy mind and body. Take the steps today outlined in this article to boost your spiritual immune system!



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master's degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.

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