

LOVE YOUR BODY BACK TO HEALTH.

THE RADICAL  
**TLC**  
SOLUTION



JEN WITTMAN CHHC, AADP

HOME HEALING PROGRAM

Your simple, 6-week self-care strategy to turn around thyroid, autoimmune and inflammatory disease.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## INTENTION OF THIS PROGRAM

Welcome! I'm so incredibly excited that you've decided to take control of your health and wellbeing, and this program is the first step. I designed this program to empower you to take your health back into your own hands to be a guide for creating your own unique healing program.

But most of all, I created this program to meet you! Thyroid and autoimmune disease can be very isolating, and people who have never been through it don't know what it's like to look normal and feel awful all the time. This program is meant to create community and give a safe space to discuss challenges, overcome obstacles and share our successes.

I designed this program so that you can do it at your own pace. Depending on how quickly you decide to adopt these new diet and lifestyle habits, you could be relieving symptoms in as little as a few days.

However, this course contains a lot of information, and with our busy lives, learning and incorporating something new can seem overwhelming. I've carefully chosen the remedies I know to be the most successful to cut down on overwhelm. There are loads of other remedies out there that you may have learned about – I've included only the ones I've found to be most effective – still there's a ton of info here. Take your time. Do what feels right to you. Explore at your own pace.

You'll see that the program is set up with one new habit to try each day, but even if you incorporate just one new habit per week, you'll be set on a path toward more energy, vitality and joy in no time.

I want you to enjoy this journey! Because it's all about rediscovering a healthy relationship with your body. Start with the habits and skills that resonate with you, the ones that will be the easiest to incorporate into your life, and get started. There is no one way to do this. Go at your own pace. You can finish this program in a matter of days, weeks or months. Do what feels right to you.

Please remember, each of us has unique food and lifestyle needs. Some of what I'm sharing with you might apply to you and some might not. Perhaps all of these suggestions apply to you. Everyone is starting from a different level, looking for help through a different lens. The important thing is to respect your body. Listen to its signals. Let it guide you to the areas where you need extra support.



When I first started on my journey, I admitted to my doctor that I felt guilty when I didn't do everything perfectly to support my healing. He advised me to surrender into healing and to trust my body—that it knows what to do to get better. He just said to support the body without trying to control everything, so that I could relax and give the body the space it would need to heal. Once I did that, I started to heal really quickly.

I am giving you permission to follow this program in the way that works best for you. If you want to read the material from beginning to end, you will gain a comprehensive understanding of your condition, symptoms, and role in reversing them. This program has a lot to chew on so reading and incorporating one chapter at a time is great too. What matters is that you TAKE ACTION, and know that you have a compassionate community to lean on.

I have designed the course to help you adopt diet and lifestyle habits in the way I think they might be most effective. We start by sifting through the superficial stressors in our lives, clearing those away so we can make space for a new healthy and vibrant life.

You can apply any of my suggestions in any order though, so if you prefer to jump around and read up on the parts that are most important to you right now, you have my full blessing.

This is your life, your recovery, and your program; make it work for you.

 Jen

# WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU

***“You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.”—Buddha***

I know this is a frightening time for you. Your body seems to have betrayed you, the medical establishment you’ve been taught to rely on often has no answers, and you feel totally alone.

First of all: You’re not crazy, and you’re not alone. I’ll be with you every step of the way.

But you’re also not a victim. You are a strong, intelligent person, and if you’ve found this program, I hope that you’ve also made the choice and the commitment to healing.

I truly believe you can vastly improve your health by following the plan I set forth in this program. But here’s the catch, my dear: you have to do the work to get there.

Some people find it easier to stay sick, as hard as that is to say. Sometimes, being sick can be a convenient excuse for not showing up fully in our lives, or not moving past a difficult period in our history. Are you hiding from healing by being a victim or choosing to stay unwell by not doing the things you know will make you better?

Healing is a process and opportunity for growth. And, in order to grow, you have to let go of the thing you are attached to that is stopping you. In other words, you have to let go of that fear, hesitation or insecurity that is holding you back. Digging deep and being honest with yourself is what will allow that to happen.

When healing a disease, we can be faced with the fear of lacking excuses. If we’re healed, we won’t have the excuse of why we “can’t” do this or that. We won’t HAVE to focus so much time and energy to caring for ourselves which means we have more time to think about what we’re not getting out of life or coming face-to-face with what makes us unhappy. It can be scary to think about what we really want out of life and if our needs are actually being met.

Be honest with yourself: are any of the above a reason you are holding yourself back from healing? If so, you’ll need to address those blocks before you can move forward.

I want you to commit to:

- honoring yourself and your body throughout this process
- knowing that you deserve to feel normal again
- accepting help from others so that you can heal
- doing the work necessary to make healing happen
- and knowing that this is your time for TLC!

It will totally *feel* like magic once your symptoms start disappearing and you start getting back to your old self, but I don't actually have a magic wand to make you all better. (I wish I did!!) You have to commit to getting well, right here, right now. Make that commitment in your heart, and I will be with you every step of the way to show you how to make it happen! Read the quote at the top of this page again. Now, are you ready to love you? Let's get started.

### **A Contract With Myself**

I hereby commit to my healing journey, which will be unique and like no one else's. I pledge to honor my body and my spirit throughout the process, ask for and accept the help I need from others to help me heal, and show up fully to do the work necessary to make healing happen.

----- Signed ----- Date

Read the contract with yourself aloud, really! Hearing it has a profound effect. Saying it to someone you love will make it even more powerful.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME

I'm here to provide you with the TLC you need and deserve. I promise you honest, well researched and proven tips toward healing. Think of me as your virtual health detective to help you find what works for you.

And, most importantly, I hope you'll consider me a friend and partner in this journey. I take this work very personally, and there's nothing I hope for more than to help you succeed and be well!

# YOU'VE GOT TO LET LOVE RULE. THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-LOVE IN HEALING

The first and most important step to healing is practicing self-love. It may sound hokey if you're used to taking care of everyone but yourself, but that, my dear friend, is likely how you got here. It's time for a change; remember that you can't take care of anyone until you take care of yourself.

Everything you do throughout this program is a gift you're giving to yourself and your family and friends. Once you stop living under the pressure and pain of thyroid disease, won't you be able to be your greatest self? So do this for you and do this for everyone you love—Treat yo'self! [Let this video be your guide.](#)

## LOVING YOURSELF MEANS LETTING OTHERS IN

It takes a village when it comes to healing, literally. And, you need people on your team. You've already got one member of your team—that's me! But your friends and family are your most important allies in healing. For people like us, asking for help can be hard, and it might require that you get vulnerable but it's important to do. You have to let people in, explain how this disease causes you suffering, talk about your plan to heal and ask them to be part of your healing team—to hold you accountable to your commitment to creating new habits that will help you heal and ask them not to tempt you or sabotage your efforts by undermining this goal. By letting people in, you will get more support than you can imagine and that boost will help you make it across the finish line even quicker—it's a victory for everyone!

If you're having trouble finding the words to let people into this world of thyroid or autoimmune dysfunction, please use this letter to help your friends and family have a better understanding. They want to help, they just might not know how.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As you may know, I have been dealing with [insert your diagnosis here]. It's a disorder that attacks my thyroid—but more than that, it attacks every aspect of my life. It is an invisible disease; most of the time, other people can't see my symptoms, but they're always there, and they're very real.

Every system in our bodies is influenced by our thyroid, and so this disease can cause a whole range of symptoms. It can cause insomnia, or make me want to sleep all day. It can cause me to gain weight and be unable to lose it, no matter what I do. It can suck all the energy I have right out of me, and leave me dealing with intense pain or a deep ache all over. It can even make me feel anxious or depressed.

And those are just *some* of the symptoms. The list goes on and on.

Because it affects every part of my body, it's very hard to diagnose and even harder to treat. I know that it's also hard for anyone who isn't me to understand what I'm going through. It may have seemed like I was complaining in the past, or making a mountain out of a molehill, but what I have is a real and serious disease, and it's not going away without a fight.

The good news is that I have decided to take control. I'm making a lot of lifestyle changes that can help me heal, and I need your help—I hope you will be a part of my healing team. First of all, I just need your understanding and support. If you want to know more about my disease, I would be happy to tell you.

Second, if I ask you for some help, I need you to understand that it's because I'm doing everything in my power to heal myself, not because I'm lazy or malingering. If you can't help, that's OK! Just the understanding will be huge.

It means so much to me to have your support right now.

{SIGNED, YOU}

## DON'T FORGET: YOUR HEALTH IS YOUR WEALTH

It's also time to think outside the HMO/PPO box when it comes to your health. The kind of health care that is the most impactful and long-term often comes from a team effort. Some practitioners on your health team will be covered by insurance—and that's a great thing. Other extremely talented, complementary, functional and integrative physicians, practitioners, coaches and experts will not be covered by the health insurance companies' wee little umbrella. But that doesn't mean they should be left out of your health care.

When we take preventive measures to protect our health and stay energized and fulfilled, we don't need to seek traditional medical care as often. We have to invest in our health—whether that means paying out of pocket for services, treatments, supplements or self-care like massage, fitness classes, Reiki, etc. The great thing is that you get to choose how to invest in your health so you get the best, most efficient health care which, in the end, will pay you back by preventing or eliminating disease as well as cutting down on health care costs now and down the road.

## WHAT YOUR DOCTOR DOESN'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU

***"If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."—Henry Ford***

I saw this quote seared into a park bench when visiting Florida when I was in my teens... eons ago. It's had a huge impact on my life and informed my reactions to life's challenges and opportunities over the years. But never did I live this quote so deeply as when I was diagnosed with Hashimoto's and told that it could be reversed and my body would come back into balance once I gave it the support it needs.

I've got to say, I'm fed up with doctors telling people that thyroid and autoimmune disease is incurable. Just because a doctor doesn't know how to cure it, doesn't mean it's incurable.

The problem isn't necessarily just with your particular doctor; it's with the system as a whole. Doctors aren't trained to prevent or reverse disease; they are trained to "treat" disease with medication or surgery. Did you know that in American medical schools, doctors aren't always required to learn about nutrition? Taking a nutrition course in medical school is usually an elective so many doctors don't even know the first place to start when it comes to advising on a healing diet for disease.

Some of my patients feel a sense of loyalty to doctors they've seen for many years; some are worried about disagreeing with a doctor because we've all been socially conditioned to see doctors as authority figures. But no single doctor is the ultimate authority in anything. You don't owe anything to a doctor who isn't serving you. You do owe it to yourself to find someone who can and will help you. (For more information to help you decide if you've found the right partner in your doctor, see the **Thyroid Love 101 book**.)

The important thing to know is that your doctor may be unintentionally setting you up for failure....and I want to undo that messaging. Our bodies have an innate wisdom to heal themselves often times in ways science can't explain yet. What's most important to know is that you have to begin loving your body again and working with it as a partner in healing. You have to trust that it knows what to do to heal itself...if only you'll give it a chance.

When you stop fighting your body and start loving it more through proper nourishment and lifestyle habits, you give yourself the space and support you need to heal. If you really want to reverse disease, eliminate symptoms, and start feeling normal again, you have to come from a place of "CAN" heal instead of can't. That may require a leap of faith but I'm here to take that leap with you. Will you join me?

## CHECK YOUR ATTITUDE

Just in case there's a little voice in the back of your mind whispering that all this "body wisdom" and "heal yourself" talk is a little woo-woo, remember that the power of the mind in relation to healing is a proven fact.

Just believing that a treatment will work has incredible—and proven—benefits. It's called the placebo effect. And no, I'm not saying that what we're going to be doing here is the equivalent of sugar pills! What I'm saying is that Western medical science has documented the power of belief in healing over and over again.

How do you get your mind in tip-top shape for healing? Lisa Rankin, MD is a leading alternative medicine practitioner, and she suggests six steps to get yourself in the mindset for healing:

1. Believe you can heal yourself. Really believe it.
2. Find the right support. That can include doctors, alternative medicine practitioners, and friends and family.
3. Listen to your body and your intuition. No one knows your body better than you do—no one! So whether it's advice from your doctor or something mentioned in this book, if it doesn't feel right, don't do it!

4. Diagnose the root causes of your illness. We're going to go through this step-by-step in the next section, but it's important to remember that your thyroid disease isn't just about your thyroid. It's about your body as a whole.
5. Write your own prescription. This doesn't mean medicine necessarily or even supplements, but rather a lifestyle prescription. We'll talk about this more in the next section.
6. Surrender attachment to a particular outcome. This is the part where I remind you that I can't guarantee the kinds of results you'll get. You might follow every action step in this book to the letter and still not see the results you hoped for. Why? We don't know. What I do know is that whatever happens, it's not your fault. Focus on the journey, not the destination.

## HOW CAN A HEALTH COACH HELP YOU?

Imagine if you had the energy to do the things you wanted to do. Imagine if you were able to keep your weight to a healthy level without giving it much thought. Imagine if you had a partner advocating for you at the doctor, finding recipes that nourish you and fit in your schedule or help you get through a panic attack. What would life be like if you had all those things? Take a moment to write 10 ways your life would change by answering the questions above.

A health coach doesn't operate under the same strictures and demands as a primary care doctor. We can set our own schedules, spend as much time with a patient as needed, and can brainstorm and implement solutions that go way beyond prescription drugs and procedures. For chronic, lifestyle-related diseases (like thyroid disorders) a health coach can be much more effective at helping you develop specific regimens and goals that work with your life.

Lifestyle changes can be difficult to achieve. (We all know we should eat better and exercise, right?? But how many of us just do it?) Traditional doctors often don't have the time or the bandwidth to truly partner with patients in achieving those changes just because of the way our medical system is set up.

Just like you might hire a personal trainer to help you navigate your new gym or reach a particular fitness goal, you can hire a health coach to help you navigate a complicated medical diagnosis and reach your health goals.

If you're interested in learning more about working with me one-on-one, [click here to schedule a discovery session](#) so that we can get to know each other better.

## MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

I need to tell you right up front that I am not a doctor. I'm providing the health information in this program as an informational resource only; nothing in this program should be relied upon for diagnostic or treatment purposes. This information is also not intended to be patient education, and doesn't create any patient-physician relationship between us. Most importantly, this program is not a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment.

You should always speak with your healthcare provider before making any decisions about your specific medical condition. Definitely don't wean yourself off any medications without your doctor's supervision. And here's the really legal bit: I expressly disclaim responsibility, and shall have no liability, for any damages, loss, injury, or liability whatsoever suffered as a result of your reliance on the information contained in this program. I do not endorse specifically any test, treatment, or procedure mentioned in this program. These are just suggestions of what has worked for me and my clients in the past.

In short, nothing in this program is to be considered medical advice.

Cool?

## MY STORY

My thyroid story starts off like so many others' out there. I spent three years feeling decimated. I had what seemed to be an all-systems breakdown of my body. My body temperature was all over the place. I was having allergic reactions to all sorts of food. I was sleeping too much and then too little; always exhausted. My hair was falling out. My skin was really dry. The list went on and on.

I described the litany of symptoms to a parade of doctors, but every one of them chalked it all up to stress or being a new mom. I insisted that something was off, so the doctors ran some standard blood tests. NORMAL. Ultrasounds were performed. NORMAL. (I started to dread the word NORMAL.)

But I didn't feel normal. I was scared. I didn't know what to do. I hoped they were right, that this was all due to stress. So I waited and worked on managing my stress. Nothing. No change. I still felt terrible.

"Oh well," I thought. "This must be what motherhood feels like. This must be what my new normal is..."

## MY ENERGY

I first realized something wasn't right after I gave birth. I know that having a newborn is exhausting at the best of times, but the level of fatigue I was feeling was off the charts. Everyone was telling me that it was normal, that every new mom was tired. But I could feel in my bones that something wasn't right.

How come all the other new moms I knew were happily and easily going out into the world with their babies? Yes, they were tired and told tales of long sleepless nights, but they were invigorated by new motherhood, their precious newborns and happy to show off the fruits of their labor. I, on the other hand was not. Getting up and getting ready for the day felt like an insurmountable task. I could literally only put the minimum effort to keeping myself and my beautiful new child alive. I managed to dress myself and feed the baby. That's it. (Luckily, I didn't have to cook for him yet. Thank goodness our bodies supply their first months of nourishment or this kid would have starved.)

## MY NAILS

I should have known something was really up when I began noticing deep ridges and what looked like pin holes throughout my nail beds. I already knew a lot about nutrition and physiology and thought this could be a warning that I was malnourished somehow. All the doctors I saw blew it off. They said it was because I was nursing and the baby was getting all that he needed from me and leaving me a little depleted. No one suggested that I should support myself through a better diet or supplements or anything. I was just supposed to blow this off as another "symptom" of new motherhood.

## MY HAIR

While I was pregnant, I started losing more hair in the shower than before. I had heard that during pregnancy my nails and hair would grow stronger. This did not happen to me. I'd asked all my different doctors about it and everyone said that it was due to the hormone shifts in pregnancy; not to worry. Of course, it didn't get better after my son was born, either...

## MY STOMACH

On top of everything else, I was having terrible stomach issues. I ended up in the emergency room twice for intense digestive attacks that turned into panic attacks where I nearly passed out from hyperventilation and severe dehydration. At each hospital visit they "checked" my thyroid and I was in the "normal" ranges. I was fine they said. Probably just the flu or food poisoning.

The girl who disliked hospitals so much that I gave birth at home was begging her husband to take her to the ER, my temperature would swing from one end of the thermometer to the other on a whim, and I was suddenly showing symptoms of being allergic to foods I never had problems with before.

But I was “fine.”

I really didn't know what to do or where to turn. I had been to 12 doctors, many of them specialists. I'd had ultrasounds of all my organs, two hospital visits and was even misdiagnosed by a doctor who herself had Hashimoto's disease!

### FINALLY: A DIAGNOSIS

Because all my symptoms were ignored during pregnancy, my son was born with some digestive troubles. We spent his first two years going to doctors, trying to figure it all out. Finally, we were referred to an integrative doctor. After just meeting my husband, son and I and speaking with us for 5 minutes about my son's health, he asked my husband and son to leave the room. He leaned over his desk and said, “What's going on with you?”

I had never met him before, but he saw my suffering right away. I broke down in tears and described my symptoms to him and he said, “I know what this is but let's give you a blood test to prove it.”

Sure enough, he knew what it was. I had Hashimoto's Thyroiditis; a disease which volleys you back and forth between symptoms of hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism. What a relief—we finally knew what was going on and it had a name! Now, what were we going to do about it?

### MAKING A PLAN

I learned very quickly that the standard medical community believes there is no cure for Hashimoto's. The belief is that one will be on medication for life or have to have the thyroid removed. This is the reason most doctors don't perform the full thyroid panel in the blood test. Regardless of the outcome, the treatment method is the same. Life-long medication.

Luckily, this new doctor had a different take. There was hope. My body could heal itself and he would help guide me on this path. I wasn't alone. I wasn't crazy. I WAS going to get better.

After working diligently to heal myself without medication, I have reversed the disease. I thank my lucky stars every day that the doctor persuaded me to trust that my body knew how to heal itself. That's a big leap of faith to take, I know! But, it felt like the best option to me and it has been proven with my ability to reverse symptoms and my antibodies.

Now, I share my story and my knowledge with you, other thyroid sufferers, to empower, inspire and support you in your healing process.

Thank you for honoring yourself and taking this pivotal step toward healing.

Our journey begins now. Let's get started! Warmly, Jen

## CREATING NEW HABITS

The next section is going to challenge you—I'm not going to lie! There is a lot of information and there are a lot of small changes that I'm going to ask you to make that will add up to big change in your life.

All these little steps will add up to BIG, important changes in your life and health. But if you've ever tried to change an old habit or start a new one before, you know that it can be easier said than done.

I've tried to make it as simple for you as possible by breaking everything down into just ONE new thing to try per day. But you can't just do each thing once! (Oh, if only!!) Each day, you'll be adding a new step to your self-love and healing routine.

Breaking new habits down into small steps is a great start to making them easier to stick to, and here are some other suggestions for making it even easier.

- **Create a "trigger" for each new habit.** For example, I talk about in the next section how I set alarms on my phone to act as a reminder and a trigger for lots of my habits, but anything can be a trigger. For example, turning on the shower to warm up can be your trigger for your morning dry brushing.
- **Think smaller than small.** Researcher BJ Fogg has dedicated his career to figuring out how to help people create new habits, and one thing he says is to break things down into the smallest possible steps. (He has a cool website to help you do this called [TinyHabits.com](https://www.tinyhabits.com) and it's totally free.) So, for example, if you find you're having a hard time tracking what you eat, make the goal smaller and try tracking just one meal. Still too hard? Try writing down just one thing you ate. Over time, just sticking to that tiny habit will make the bigger habit easier.

- **Bring on a buddy.** We've already talked a little bit about building your health team, and we'll talk more about it in the next section, but having an accountability buddy can be extremely useful. Ask a friend to text or email you once a day to see how you did—not to pass judgement, but to support you on your journey.
- **Remove temptation.** I go through this more in the Patry Pro Guide, but when you're trying to give up something, getting it totally out of your life for a while is the way to go.
- **Embrace imperfection.** I think one of the biggest reasons people give up on new habits is because they have an all-or-nothing mentality. "Because I ate that cookie, I've totally blown my diet, so I should just eat all of them." Or, "Because I missed one day of recording my temperatures and symptoms, I should just give up because now my data's no good." Let it go, honey! None of us are perfect. Every time you fall off whatever wagon, get up and get back on as soon as possible. Perfection isn't the goal; consistently trying is.
- **Reward yourself!** I've built in reward days every week—don't skip them! It's important to reward all your hard work.

## YOUR 6-WEEK HEALING PLAN RESOURCES

I have created a link for all of your 6-week healing plan resources including your Temperature Tracker, Food Journal and Symptom Tracker and your Time Management Ninja Maker. [Click here to access these resources.](#)

## MY HEALING SCHEDULE

Below you'll find my current healing schedule and lifestyle plan. This has changed so many times over the years. When I first started on my journey, my day was WAY more filled with things I had to do to support my healing. I was able to incorporate more of the stuff I wanted to do vs. I had to do to jumpstart healing. Dedicating myself at the beginning of my journey paid off quickly. This is just a sample of what a healing schedule could look like. At the end of this program, you will craft your own to fit your unique needs and lifestyle.

TIME	HEALING TO DOs
<b>6 am – 8 am:</b>	Meditate Dry Brush/Rebound Quickie Yoga or 8-min Abs/Buns/Arms/Legs DVD Get Dressed Breakfast with the family
<b>8:30 am – 11:30 am:</b>	Work
<b>11:30 am – 12:00 pm:</b>	Lunch
<b>12:00 pm – 3:00 pm:</b>	Work
<b>3:00 pm – 3:30 pm:</b>	Mommy Hat Goes On – Dinner Family Time. Tap Dance Class on Wednesdays!
<b>7:30 pm – 8:30 p.m:</b>	Guilty Pleasure TV Time
<b>8:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m:</b>	Hubby, Reading, Journaling Time
<b>10:00 p.m:</b>	Lights out

I do this Monday – Thursday. On Fridays, I give myself the gift of a morning off self-care to process the madness of the week, clear my head and prepare for a full weekend of errands, family, friends and fun. My self-care morning may include a walk in nature, a massage or exploring the wine country. I take that time to revive myself from the week and then head to work. On Saturdays, I've made a deal with my husband that I'll make the menu plan and grocery list and he'll go grocery shopping. Our son has a class for 2 hours on Saturdays so that gives me 2 hours without the boys to decompress and head out to do a sauna. Asking for help has really paid off over the years!

# Step-By-Step Action Plans

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## YOUR SIMPLE, 6-WEEK STRATEGY TO TURN AROUND THYROID, AUTOIMMUNE & INFLAMMATORY DISEASE.

When I was writing this book, and I reflected on what this journey has been about for me personally, I realized that this has been about learning to fall in love with myself again. The common thread connecting myself and my clients are that we are people who nurture everyone else in our lives but we aren't great about nurturing ourselves. We're often Type-A people who need to control and do everything ourselves with little help from others... But, we're the first people called when someone needs love, support, friendship, and so on.

All that is great, except somewhere along the way, we've forgotten that we're worthy and deserving of the same love we show others. And when you are diagnosed with a thyroid disorder, it gets worse... Your body turns on you, you feel and/or get fat, you don't like yourself, your mind, your body, the way you feel, your energy level, your inability to do what others do (to feel normal), etc.

Hypothyroidism/Hashimoto's can take you on a journey to self-loathing and that's where I bottomed out before I picked myself up and decided I was determined to heal. What I learned was that I had to love myself and my body again. That we couldn't be at war with each other. I had to love my thyroid, respect it and give it compassionate care in order to heal. I had to work with my body again and show it love through proper nourishment and self-care.

I want to help you make that same journey back to loving yourself with this step-by-step plan. By just taking 1 small step each day, you can set yourself up for optimal healing. I want to make it as easy as possible for you, so I've outlined exactly what steps you need to take to start healing yourself today.

Are you ready? Let's get started!

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# WEEK 1

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# WEEK 1 HEALING PLAN

ACTION STEPS	DESCRIPTION
DAY 1	Read through the Week 1 Healing Plan.
DAY 2	Check your most recent blood tests. Are you within "optimal" range?
DAY 3	Make appt. w/doctor or order tests if you need updated test results.
DAY 4	Buy/Order Basal Thermometer.
DAY 5	Begin your food journal & digestive symptom tracker.
DAY 6	Begin tracking your temperature.
DAY 7	Treat yo'self! Do one loving thing for yourself today.

## TRACK YOURSELF... AND KNOW YOUR STATS

Reversing thyroid and autoimmune disease requires a holistic approach. It's important to understand what's going on with your body on many different levels to know where to start to help soothe and solve your particular issues.

In other words, we've got to know what we're working with here, so let's track what's going on with your body. This is a hugely important step to understanding what's happening with your health, so set yourself up for success by committing to tracking now.

Tracking is about seeing where you're starting and charting what's working for you and what's not...as well as watching yourself get better as your overall health improves. I don't want you to get obsessed about tracking yourself, but instead to use it as a guide and check-in point with your body. This isn't about adding more stress to your life; it's about giving you a tool to understand what's going on with your health and healing.

**Important note:** Tracking isn't the same as judging. You might not like what you see when you start tracking. You might get upset or angry when you see how wildly your temperature swings, how often you're experiencing symptoms, or how certain foods affect your health. Every time you feel yourself judging or getting angry at yourself or your body, try to acknowledge the thought, and then let it go... It's nobody's fault (not yours or your body's!), and always remember you're on the road to feeling better.

## TRACK YOUR TEMP

The first key indicator we want to look at is your temperature. While tracking your temperature isn't a definitive way to diagnose thyroid dysfunction, it can clue you into whether your thyroid is being challenged, and over time it can gauge how you're healing.

When I first started out, I tracked my temperature for a couple of months to see where I was at. You can track your temperature for as long as you'd like, but I recommend at least 1 month to get a good set of numbers to start with. I come back to tracking from time to time when I need to assess how I'm doing.

Don't get too hung up on your temp and don't make it another point of stress in your life. It's just a small detail in the story. It's not a main point of focus but it's great information to have on the beginning of your healing journey. Or if you're not sure you have a thyroid disease and want to get a feel for it, temperature tracking is the cheapest and easiest thyroid "test" you can take! It's also relatively convenient and discrete.

## TRACKING YOUR TEMPERATURE

Download the [TLC Temperature Tracker](#) below for information and instructions on how to start tracking your temperature.

### WHAT THIS TRACKS:

1. Use this chart to help you see what trends emerge with your symptoms as it relates to your temperature.
2. Once you start applying my simple, natural protocols over the next few weeks, this will become one method of tracking how your symptoms improve as your temperature stabilizes.
3. If you have been misdiagnosed or undiagnosed, this can provide evidence to your doctor that you are not only healing your thyroid but that a low functioning thyroid was the problem.

## HOW TO USE:

1. Use a BASAL thermometer.
2. Upon rising, without much movement, take your temperature. This temperature will not be included in the daily average. It is just used for your reference.
3. Take your temperature at 10am, 1pm, and 4pm. Record these temps and the spreadsheet will automatically calculate and chart your average. I have a daily reminder alarm set in my phone that alerts me each time I need to take my temp, and I initially record my temperatures on my phone's notepad.

\*\*\*Anything below 98.4 could indicate hypothyroidism but anything below 97.8 is definitely in hypothyroid territory. Anything consistently above 98.6 could be indicative of hyperthyroid.

## TRACK YOUR SYMPTOMS

With more than [300 symptoms](#) related to thyroid disease (check [HypothyroidMom's](#) link for the full list), it's important to have a record for your doctor or any other practitioner helping you heal. When we have this information we can see where you're starting, what times of day are more symptomatic, what kinds of symptoms you're really dealing with, and if any particular food is contributing to your symptoms. By tracking your symptoms, you will know where to best start and how you're improving over time.

Again, this isn't about judging yourself, your body, or your symptoms. It's about gathering information to help you heal.

## TRACKING YOUR FOOD, MOOD AND SYMPTOMS

Use the [The Radical TLC Solution Food Journal & Symptom Tracker](#) for a full seven days to see the most benefit, and try to be as thorough and complete as possible. If you're experiencing a symptom when it's not convenient to write on your chart, make a note in your phone and record it later. Likewise, you can take a photo of your meals and snacks to help you document them at a later time.

After completing your seven-day food journal and symptom tracker, did you notice any patterns? Do certain foods correlate to specific symptoms for you? When you look at your overall diet, in what ways is it out of balance? Are you eating a lot of things that inflame your system like grains, gluten, dairy or sugar? What could you eat more of to round out your meals? What healthy swaps could you make so that your meals and snacks are power packed with important minerals and nutrients?

In Week 2, you'll learn more about how to eat for energy, health and eliminating symptoms. So save that tracker!

## SCHEDULE TESTS (IF NEEDED)

The next step is to see what's happening inside with good blood tests. If your blood tests are more than six months old, now would be a great time to get a comprehensive panel of tests done. If you have recent blood tests, check them against the chart below to make sure your levels are in "optimal" range.

Thyroid and autoimmune diseases share a lot of symptoms with other inflammatory and degenerative diseases, and it can be hard to pinpoint what exactly is going on with your unique body if you just do a basic test.

That's why it's important to get comprehensive testing done instead of just the bare minimum so you can analyze the body's system holistically. In very basic terms, most doctors have a very wide range of levels that they consider "normal"—but normal does not mean optimal. This is why thyroid disease is often misdiagnosed or undiagnosed altogether. The conventional test waits until your thyroid is almost completely malfunctioning before it indicates that you need treatment.

However, if you look at blood markers from a functional medical perspective, you can catch, prevent, or reverse thyroid and autoimmune disease much earlier and much more easily. Looking at blood work "functionally" allows us to see patterns in the functioning or areas where processes are slowing or breaking down before they become "pathological," or in other words, a medically defined disease.

To determine if tests beyond blood testing would benefit you, refer to **The Radical TLC Solution: Thyroid Love 101** guide. You will also find a chart with **The Optimal Ranges for Blood Test Markers Including Thyroid Panels** below.

## OPTIMAL RANGES FOR BLOOD TEST MARKERS INCLUDING THYROID PANELS

Take your blood test results and compare them to the values listed below. This is not intended to replace medical advice but instead to empower you and your doctor to discuss the best course for your care based on where your levels fall regarding the optimal or functional ranges. Working with a doctor, practitioner, nutritionist or health coach who looks at blood test values from a functional perspective will help you have the best outcome.

\*Ranges may vary by lab and new normal ranges are put in effect on an ongoing basis. Accepted normal and functional ranges are subject to change. In the research, normal & optimal ranges vary considerably. I've compiled a list of the most frequent blood tests used by functional practitioners to evaluate disease. Also, I've presented the ranges I've seen most frequently in the literature or have heard from speaking with way too many doctors on this matter.

TEST NAME	OPTIMAL/ FUNCTIONAL RANGE	NORMAL RANGE
<b>TSH</b>	1.3 – 1.8 uIU/ml or 1.5 – 2.2 uIU/ml	.5 - 5.0 uIU/ml
<b>Free T3 or FT3</b>	3.2-3.3 pg/ml	2.3 – 4.2 pg/ml
<b>Free T4 or FT4</b>	1.2 – 1.3 ng/dl	.8 – 1.8 ng/dl
<b>Resin T3 Uptake</b>	28 -38 mg/dL	22-39 mg/dL
<b>Total T4 or TT4</b>	5.4-11.5 ug/d	6-12 ug/d
<b>Free Thyroxine Index or FTI</b>	1.2-4.9 mg/dl	4.6-10.9 mg/dl
<b>Thyroxine Binding Globulin or TBG</b>	18 -27 ug/dl	15 -30 ug/dl
<b>TPO Antibody (auto-antibodies)</b>	< 15	<15
<b>Glucose</b>	85 – 100 mg/dL	65 - 115 mg/dL
<b>Uric Acid</b>	Male: 3.7 – 6.0 mg/dL Female: 3.2 – 5.5 mg/dL	2.2 - 7.7 mg/dL
<b>BUN</b>	13 – 18 mg/dL	5 – 25 mg/dL
<b>Creatinine</b>	0.7 – 1.1 mg/dL	0.6 - 1.5 mg/dL
<b>Sodium</b>	135 – 140 mmol/L	135 – 145 mmol/L
<b>Potassium</b>	4.0 – 4.5 mmol/L	3.5 - 5.3 mmol/L
<b>Chloride</b>	100 – 106 mmol/L	97 – 107 mmol/L
<b>Carbon Dioxide</b>	25 -30 mmol/L	23 – 32 mmol/L
<b>Anion Gap</b>	7 – 12 mmol/L	6 – 16 mmol/L
<b>Calcium</b>	9.2 – 10.1 mg/dL	8.5-10.8 mg/dL
<b>Phosphorus</b>	3.5 – 4.0 mg/dL	2.5-4.5 mg/dL
<b>Magnesium</b>	2.0 – 2.5 mg/dL	1.5-2.3 mg/dL

TEST NAME	OPTIMAL/ FUNCTIONAL RANGE	NORMAL RANGE
Total Protein	6.9 – 7.4 G/dL	6.0-8.5 G/dL
Albumin	4.0 – 5.0 G/dL	3.5-5.5 G/dL
Globulin	2.4 – 2.8 G/dL	2.0-3.9 G/dL
A/G Ratio	1.5 – 2.0 Units	1.1 - 2.5 Units
Total Bilrubin	0.2 – 1.2 mg/dL	.1 - 1.2 mg/dL
Alk.Phosphatase	70 – 90 U/L	25 – 120 U/L
LDH	140 – 180 U/L	1 – 240 U/L
AST (SGOT)	10 – 26 U/L	0 – 40 U/L
ALT (SGPT)	10 – 26 U/L	0 – 45 U/L
GGTP	10 – 26 U/L	1 – 70 U/L
Serum Iron	85 – 130 mcg/dL	30 – 170 mcg/dL
Cholesterol	150 – 200 mg/dL * de- pending on philosophy 150-220 is also optimal	130-200 mg/dL
Triglycerides	75 – 100 mg/dL	30-150 mg/dL
HDL Cholesterol	More than 55 mg/dL	40-90 mg/dL
LDL Cholesterol	Less than 120mg/dl	60-130 mg/dL
Chol/HDL Ratio	Less than 3.1	---
WBC	5.0 – 8.0	3.7-11.0
RBC	Female: 3.9 – 4.4 Male: 4.2 – 4.9	Female: 3.8 – 5.1 Male: 4.6 - 6.0
Hemoglobin	Female: 13.5 – 14.5 Male: 14 – 15	Female: 11.5-15.0 Male: 12.5-17.0
Hematocrit	Female: 37 – 44 Male: 40 – 48	Female: 34-44 Male: 36-50
MCV	85 – 92 cu microns	80-98
MCH	27 – 32 cu microns	27-34
MCHC	32 – 35%	32 – 36 %
RDW	Less than 13	11.7 - 15
Platelets	150,000 – 450,000	155,000 - 385,000
Neutrophils	40 – 60%	35 – 74%
Lymphocytes	25 – 40%	14 – 46%
Monocytes	Less than 7%	4 – 13%
Eosinophils	Less than 3%	0 – 7%
Basophils	0 – 1%	0 – 3%
Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (Sed Rate)	Males: <5mm/hour Females: <10 mm/hour	Males: 0-15 mm/hour Females: 0-20 mm/ hour

## TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR

I'm sad to say that you may get push back from your doctor on having all these tests run. That's because our medical system is set up to save money (for insurance companies) and for doctors to treat disease when it's present; not to focus on factors that can help prevent or reverse disease.

For example, many doctors won't test for antibodies because it doesn't change the only treatment protocol they have in their arsenal—medicine. That does you no good if you've been on medication and are still suffering. You need to know WHY you are symptomatic so you can support your body to repair itself. Prescriptions are like a Band-Aid. They don't heal the cut; the body does that. So, you've got to support the body so that it can reverse disease and eliminate symptoms.

The first thing you can do is print out the **TLC Recommended Blood Tests for Initial Assessment** to give to your doctor. You can also bring in your symptom tracker and temperature trackers as "proof" that you are symptomatic.

**TLC RECOMMENDED BLOOD TESTS FOR INITIAL ASSESSMENT:**

Please fast 8-10 hours prior to taking the blood test. It's best to take it first thing in the morning. Drink lots of water before taking the exam.

BASIC PANELS:	THYROID SPECIFIC PANELS:
CMP Lipid Plus/Direct LDL Urinalysis CBC with differential Vitamin D, 25 OH, 125 OH Serum Iron Ferritin LDH Magnesium Uric Acid Phosphorous ESR DHEA Sulfate GGTP CRP HBA1C Homocysteine CPK Total Serum Osteocalcin Alkaline Phosphotase Isoenzymes (Intestine/Hepatic/Bone Isoenzyme percentages)	TSH Reverse T3 Free T3 Free T4 Antithyroglobulin AB (TgAb)** Thyroid Peroxidase Antibody (TPO)** Thyroid Stimulating Immunoglobulin (TSI)** Thyroxine Binding Globulin (TBG)**  **valuable tests which most conventional practitioners ignore. Get these tests!

If your doctor still won't order the tests you need, you can get them ordered yourself. I always recommend people try to go through their doctor first, but there is another way when necessary.

1. Go to [Direct Labs](#) and order the blood tests from the printable list. You'll pay for the order up front (you can often submit these charges to insurance). From there, you'll receive a doctor's order for your blood tests that you can take to a local lab. (If you get confused, Direct Labs customer service department is very friendly and helpful if you need assistance.)
2. Schedule an appointment with your local lab. I like [Lab Corp](#) the best but there are others. Find a nice, clean local lab and bring your order from Direct Labs. Lab Corp definitely takes insurance so often I don't have to pay anything up front. \*Also note, it's best to schedule an appointment with them to cut down on wait time.
3. Direct Labs will send you an email letting you know your results are ready. Get your results through their online portal. If you understand the results, that's great. If not, take them to your doctor or another trusted health care expert for review.

You can learn more about what each test is and how it helps assess the situation in ***The Radical TLC Solution: Thyroid Love 101 guide.***

Remember: You are your body's best advocate, not anyone else. If you don't agree with your doctor's recommendations, seek out another doctor or another way to get the support you need!

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# WEEK 2

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## WEEK 2 HEALING PLAN

ACTION STEPS	DESCRIPTION
DAY 1	Read through the Week 2 Healing Plan.
DAY 2	Read through the <a href="#">Pantry Pro Guide</a> .
DAY 3	Clean your pantry.
DAY 4	Create your personalized menu plan & grocery list.
DAY 5	Get new groceries & restock your pantry.
DAY 6	Get started with your first day of gluten-freedom!
DAY 7	Treat yo'self! Do one loving thing for yourself today. (This does not mean order yourself a plate of glutinous pancakes) :)

## FIX YOUR FOOD

Eating is one of the most natural things we do as human beings—as natural as breathing. Infants only minutes old figure out how to eat. Yet somewhere along the line, we have made things incredibly complicated!

When you have a thyroid disease, eating can feel even more complicated. But it doesn't need to be!

I get these questions on a daily basis: "What can I eat anymore? No matter how much I diet or exercise, I can't seem to lose weight. Is there a diet I can use to lose weight? I read so much on food and thyroid but there is a lot of info out there that contradicts itself. Is there anything left I can eat?"

The answer is YES...and I know the place to start.

Food and nutrition lay the foundation for healing. Our society has separated healthcare and food, but for centuries and in many cultures, the two were one in the same.

Most people with thyroid and autoimmune disease have a leaky gut which makes it harder for them to get nutrients from their food. Leaky gut is when food toxins (like gluten) or chemicals (i.e. preservative additives and pesticides) breach the barrier the intestines are supposed to provide and make their way into the bloodstream, and it manifests itself in many ways. It's crucial to heal the leaky gut and limit inflammation in your body, and following these guidelines will work to do both.

But I'm not going to sugarcoat this (because sugar is one of the things hurting you!): it may not be easy.

Instead of committing to a life of easy, I'm asking you to commit to yourself. I know it's hard to change lifelong habits. I went from eating and ENJOYING a biscuit and gravy Midwestern diet of bread, cheese, more bread and added sugar to eating and ENJOYING a diet rich in fresh, organic fruits and veggies, meats from animals that get to live outside, feeding on green pasture, fish that are wild caught and high quality fats. If healthy eating doesn't taste good to you, that's how you know there's a problem. By making the changes I'm recommending, your taste buds will start to prefer kale to cake in no time. I know you don't believe me now but you'll see.

This diet is not about deprivation, it's about reparation. Repairing the years of damage from eating the SAD (Standard American Diet). Repairing the gut lining so you can metabolize food properly and absorb important nutrients and minerals. Repairing your body so you can support your thyroid and manage your weight. All of this with quick, delicious meals that are simple to make and will never leave you hungry... and I never have to count calories or watch my portion size. I eat as much of this goodness as I want and feel better every day.

During this week, you'll learn the most important things you need to do to repair your body, support your thyroid, reverse autoimmune disease and eliminate symptoms. I'll give you recommendations on the best resources for learning how to customize this to your needs. *Buon Appetito!*

## WHY YOUR GUT NEEDS TLC—BIG TIME!

Have you experienced issues with new food allergies or sensitivities since your thyroid diagnosis? Has your doctor mentioned that there's a connection?

The popular quote by Hippocrates, ***"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food,"*** could not ring more true. In order for our bodies to heal, we must provide them with the nourishment they need through whole, unprocessed foods. But, what happens to healing when your body isn't absorbing the nourishing foods properly?

Hippocrates also said, ***"All disease begins in the gut,"*** and that's where we'll start this story. If your body isn't functioning properly, disease will be able to creep in

and take hold. Poor gut health is intricately connected to low thyroid function and additionally, can trigger Hashimoto's disease.

When your thyroid isn't functioning optimally, it causes inflammation and immune dysregulation which in turns causes a leaky gut. The leaky gut then causes more inflammation and immune dysregulation which then further harms the thyroid. Press repeat. The cycle of destruction is endless if it is not addressed. An inflamed and leaky gut contributes to just about every disease out there. Without healing the gut, you cannot truly heal the thyroid or reverse the autoimmune response. This is the story of how your leaky gut began.

### NOW, WHAT EXACTLY IS IT AND HOW DO WE FIX IT?

Let's talk about the gut first. The gut is host to 70% of your immune tissue in your body. These tissues store immune cells that carry out attacks and produce antibodies if there is a foreign invader or potential threats. That's a really good function if you have a bacteria or virus coming in for attack. However, when these protective functions are compromised, the intestinal barrier becomes permeable (leaky) meaning stuff escapes through it into the bloodstream.

Since food proteins (like casein, gluten, et al) don't belong outside of the gut, the body initiates an immune response and attacks them. (This is what creates an "allergic" response or food sensitivity.) The problem comes in when the body turns the attack on itself in response to the protein (think gluten) and, as in the case of Hashimoto's, inadvertently attacks the thyroid gland. Studies have shown that these attacks are linked to the development of all types of autoimmune disease.

Tight junctions keep the barrier of the stomach and small intestine impermeable; meaning that proteins can't pass through. That's what we want. Thyroid hormones strongly influence the tight junctions in the gut. However, when thyroid health is compromised, the gut can become inflamed leading to further permeability just continuing the cycle.

Inflammation in the gut also increases cortisol levels, and too much cortisol (the stress hormone) in the system presents a cascading set of challenges including weight gain and further thyroid degeneration.

Another component to healing a leaky gut is having the right gut-bacteria balance. Bacteria in the gut actually assist in converting 20% of inactive T4 into the active form of T3. This is what we use to balance our body's metabolic functions. This is what we need to have good energy, feel right in our bodies and to keep our weight stable.

**Major Takeaway:** There are five major reasons that you need to love your gut back to health in order to heal your thyroid:

1. There needs to be a balance of beneficial bacteria in the gut to make your thyroid hormone levels work right
2. We need to keep stress and inflammation low in order to heal our bodies
3. We need to reverse the autoimmune response
4. Low stomach acid increases intestinal permeability which is linked with autoimmune thyroid disease. It is also associated with GERD, inflammation and infection.
5. Constipation can impair hormone clearance and cause elevations in estrogen causing problems with the thyroid. It also increases inflammation, infections and doesn't allow for proper absorption in the gut.

I'm pretty certain that my friends and family are tired of me telling them that they have a leaky gut. But they DO! And you do too. And it needs to be fixed to start feeling better.

As you can see, you can't have a healthy gut without a healthy thyroid, and you can't have a healthy thyroid without a healthy gut. To boost thyroid function and heal your gut, you have to address both simultaneously.

Healing a leaky gut isn't something that can happen overnight. (That's the bad news.) The good news is that it CAN be healed, and I'm going to help you do it. Read on...

## RADICAL KITCHEN LOVE

As our first step towards a healthier diet, I'm going to ask you to clear out your pantry and free yourself from the unhealthy foods that are harming you.

This is easy for some people and super hard for others. If you find yourself having a hard time letting go of some foods that are former favorites, or making excuses like, "I have to keep this around for my husband/kids," I just want to remind you of something very important:

Food can't love you. Only you can love you.

That cookie or brownie or whatever it is that's singing its siren song to you from the pantry shelves doesn't actually have the love you're looking for. And, in my experience, when we eat for the wrong reasons, it almost always boils down to looking for love. **Think about it for a second. Why do you eat what you eat?**

I'm asking you to take a monumental step here and commit to loving yourself in a way those cookies never could. And it all starts here: Open up your [Radical TLC Solution: Pantry Pro Guide](#) and get going!

Now, let's talk a little bit more about why you're eliminating some of these foods from your diet.

### "SOY"ANARA

I love soy. Thanks to the generosity of our wedding guests, I spent my honeymoon in Japan and I soy-ed it up! I live in a city of amazing Thai, Malay, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese and Chinese cuisine and I love them all. So, when I first learned that I should give up soy to assist my healing, I was not a happy girl.

It turns out, soy is an endocrine-disrupting compound. It is a goitrogen, which is a substance that suppresses or disrupts normal thyroid function. It can also block the uptake of iodine, which can in turn enlarge the thyroid, creating a "goiter." If the body is unable to use iodine correctly, the creation, conversion and actual secretion of T3 and T4 can be disrupted.

So, soy is not the health food it's been touted to be.

- Soy reduces assimilation of calcium, magnesium, copper, iron and zinc in the body.
- Soy foods can increase the body's requirement for vitamin D.
- The neurotoxin, MSG, is formed during soy food processing and additional amounts are added to many soy foods.
- Soy foods contain high levels of aluminum which can be toxic to the nervous system and the kidneys.
- Children with autoimmune thyroiditis are more likely to have been fed soy-based infant formula.
- In some people, soy can inhibit the body's ability to fully absorb thyroid medication.

Soy is very high in plant estrogens, and when there is excess estrogen produced in the body, it directly inhibits your thyroid gland from releasing its thyroid hormones. Excess estrogen also inhibits the conversion of thyroid hormone in the liver. Soy can inhibit the absorption of key nutrients within your digestive tract which can keep your thyroid from getting the support it needs to function properly.

**Major takeaway:** If you want to heal your thyroid, you need to take a break from soy products.

Soy is a pervasive ingredient in our quick-paced, fast-food, processed food culture. [Click here to see where this culprit lives in our food.](#) There's also a list of other goitrogenic foods to limit in your diet.

## HELP! I'M ADDICTED TO SUGAR

Ok, "addicted" may be too strong of a word but maybe you REALLY love sugar and wouldn't mind working in Willy Wonka's factory for a day.

Unfortunately, on a general level, sugar inhibits all healing. Sugar creates inflammation, turns off your body's appetite-control function, leads to weight gain and belly fat, feeds candida (yeast) and has a host of additional toxic effects. All of that sounds terrible enough but it gets worse.

### What does this mean for your thyroid?

Many people with thyroid dysfunction seem to be especially sensitive to refined sugars or even consuming too many natural sugars. When you constantly consume sugar, you literally burn out your adrenal and thyroid glands. There is a risk of damaging or even destroying the thyroid. If you don't reduce or eliminate sugar in the diet, there is a risk for permanent damage and that's no good!

Sugar can also affect your mood and energy levels.

Are you always hungry? Do you get bouts of dizziness, nervousness, a racing heartbeat, shakiness or sweating? Do you feel like you could turn into the Incredible Hulk if you miss a meal?

If any of these resonate with you, you could have an issue with your blood sugar. Keeping your blood sugar regulated is crucial to healthy thyroid function and to keep your blood sugar in a normal range your thyroid needs to be functioning properly. Whether your blood sugar is too low or too high, it can create issues for the thyroid. When your blood sugar isn't regulated it will take its toll on your body in the form of:

- high blood pressure
- inflammation
- abdominal obesity
- high cholesterol and triglycerides
- insulin resistance
- tendency to form blood clots.

Blood sugar surges, which can cause insulin resistance, increase the destruction of the thyroid in people with Hashimoto's disease. The more destruction that occurs in the gland, the more thyroid hormone production falls.

When your blood sugar is chronically low, cortisol (the stress hormone) is repeatedly released, which suppresses pituitary function. If your pituitary gland isn't functioning properly, the thyroid won't function properly either.

Blood sugar regulation is crucial to healing. If you don't stabilize your blood sugar, your thyroid will not be able to heal.

### **How to heal.**

One of the quickest ways to get control of your weight and balance your body's blood sugar/insulin processes again is by cutting sugar out of your diet. Even if you currently only eat "natural" sugars from fruit, honey, agave nectar, you could still be ingesting an enormous amount per day.

I am not saying to cut sugar out of your diet forever. Fruits definitely have some health benefits as does raw honey, but by eliminating sugar from your diet for a short period of time, you let your body learn to regulate your blood sugar levels, get a better sense of when you're actually hungry, increase your immune system's ability to fight off illness and ward off candida infections.

Sugar is pervasive in our American diet. All kinds of foods that you would not associate with sugar have been processed with this other "white powder." Did you know that even some taco seasonings and tomato sauces contain added sugars?!

After I quit sugar, my health improved immediately. Once you quit sugar, you don't crave sweets as much and when you do take a bite of dessert, a bite is all you actually need to feel satiated. I'm not perfect! None of us are. I fall prey to the siren call of sugar from time to time, but at least I have the tools to reign it back in quickly. It's amazing the power sugar can have over your mind. Studies have shown that sugar is four times as addictive as cocaine! So, "Just Say No" to this white powder.

### **GLUTEN & GRAIN-FREE(DOM)**

My husband and I saved up for 7 years so I could pursue my dream of cooking in Italy almost a decade ago. ITALY, I said! Home of the most amazing, rich, pillow-like pasta you could ever hope to eat.

When we lived in Italy, my day started off by walking down 104 stairs to the neighborhood "bar" (the place where you get breakfast), where I'd order a cappuccino and a pastry at the counter every single day. At lunch time, I would select some of

the finest cheese, meat and olives I could afford and buy a loaf of fresh baked bread. I'd end at dinner at a little trattoria enjoying what Italy is world-famous for—perfect pizzas or a rich, delicious, pasta dish that was out of this world. We'd often end dinner with a doughy, sweet treat and an espresso or *digestivo*.

Does it seem like I'm the kind of girl who could not only give up my coffee but my gluten too? Well, I did. And here's why....

Gluten molecules resemble thyroid tissue. What does this mean to you? It means that if you have intestinal permeability (leaky gut) or a sensitivity to gluten, your body will mistakenly attack your thyroid believing it is attacking the gluten molecules.

What happens with autoimmune disease is that the body is having an overactive immune response against substances and tissues normally present in the body. In addition, the thyroid gland is connected to so many of the body's systems including gastrointestinal function, stomach acid production, adrenal hormone metabolism, changes in brain chemistry and liver detoxification. So, when a gluten molecule escapes through the walls of the digestive tract and the body starts attacking the gluten, it inadvertently begins to attack the thyroid as well, continuing its destruction.

That's pretty serious stuff. Educated doctors and thyroid researchers insist that if you want to stop the destruction of the thyroid, you must stop eating gluten.

You may have heard all of this before, but now is the time to start acting on it. If you truly want to heal your thyroid condition, you've got to love your body enough to put your hands up and drop the croissant.

"How can I give up my pasta or pizza? What will I eat instead?" you wonder. "Will I ever be full?"

I promise you will and there are loads of delicious, naturally gluten-free foods out there. Giving up gluten seems unappealing and daunting, I know. But you can shift your thinking from giving something up to gaining something back: your health.

This is not an act of self-deprivation, my friend; it is an act of self love.

I've been through it, and before I started living gluten-free, I wasn't sure how I would ever succeed. But I did succeed. And I learned loads of tips and tricks and have a host of new recipe resources to boot. I began feeling so much better after parting ways with gluten that I don't even feel like I need it anymore. Sure, a piece of fresh-baked bread smells delightful but my body doesn't actually crave it anymore. If I can do it, so can you. So go ahead...just do it!

## PUFAS & FODMAPS & BEARS, OH MY!

You may or may not have heard of PUFAS & FODMAPS and although confusing as heck, they're important to know about because these compounds in certain foods may be affecting your thyroid or inhibiting your healing process.

### **What are PUFAs?**

Polyunsaturated fatty acid or PUFA is the technical term for a type of fat with two or more double bonds. That really means nothing to me but what you need to know is that PUFAs inhibit thyroid hormone activation, down-regulating metabolism and causing weight gain. The most concentrated sources of PUFAs are in vegetable oils, like sunflower, safflower, corn, flax, sesame, and canola—in other words, the stuff the food industry told us was better for us. (SHEESH!)

PUFAs are bad for thyroid sufferers especially because they change into hormone-like substances in the body that can cause inflammation, pain, aging and even cancer. They poison your cells, inhibit your thyroid, and diminish your metabolism.

It's impossible to totally eliminate PUFAs from your diet, but you can minimize their impact by choosing fats that come from cows, sheep and goats (i.e.: butter and lard), coconut oil, cocoa butter and palm kernel oil. Olive oil is also safe in moderation. You can also make sure you're getting enough vitamin B3, from protein like chicken, tuna or lamb or veggies like mushrooms, to help combat the effects of the PUFAs you do consume.

### **What are FODMAPs?**

The acronym FODMAP stands for Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides and Polyols. (Say WHAT?!?) Basically they are carbohydrates that are incompletely absorbed in the gut and can be easily fermented by gut bacteria. That fermentation can cause gas, bloating, pain, and lots of other bad belly symptoms.

Lactose from dairy, fructose from certain fruits, coconut, and sugars are high in FODMAPs and can be bad news for people with gut disorders like leaky gut, IBS and Crohn's disease.

Some people with gut disorders react strongly to FODMAPs and some don't. The only way to find out which group you fall into is to eliminate them from your diet for a time and track your symptoms.

You can also try taking probiotics to help balance your good gut flora. Once you have a balanced gut, FODMAPs may not affect you as strongly.

## PALEO PLEASURES AND HOW TO BUY THEM ON A BUDGET

So, you might be thinking: sugar free? Gluten free? Soy free? What are we, cavemen?!?

Actually, the meal plan I'm suggesting is inspired by the Paleo diet. The number one tenant of the Paleo diet is basically to just eat real, whole foods—which automatically eliminates preservatives, hidden sugars, sodium, additives, coloring, artificial flavorings and any number of other gross things the food industry might come up with. It also recommends healthy fats and proteins from wild-caught fish or animals raised on pasture.

Eating the way the Paleo diet suggests also comes with a wide range of benefits in addition to the benefits to your thyroid, including:

- Increased and more stable energy levels
- Improved sleep
- Clearer skin and healthier looking hair
- Mental clarity
- Improved mood and attitude
- Improvements in those suffering depression or anxieties
- Less or no bloating, decreased gas
- Sustained weight loss
- Muscle growth; increased fitness
- Lowered risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer
- Higher immune function and a general feeling of well being
- Improved glucose tolerance; decreased insulin secretion and increased insulin sensitivity
- Improved lipid profiles
- Healthier gut flora
- Better absorption of nutrients from food
- Reduced allergies
- Paleo diet is anti-inflammatory, most people experience reduction of pain associated with inflammation
- Improvements in those with respiratory problems such as asthma

While the diet I suggest is inspired by Paleo, I believe we should always take the best and leave the rest. I don't think strict adherence to a Paleo diet is the right fit for everyone. Plus, there are almost as many variations of the Paleo or primal diet as there are books and experts out there!

Here's what I do: I believe in veggie heavy Paleo eating. Your meals should consist of loads of vegetables with a side of meat. Yes, a side of meat and not the other way around. I found that when the diet gets too meat heavy, my body and my system got a little sluggish and stinky (I won't go into all of the dirty details). The point is that, although I felt better overall, I didn't feel great when I was eating too much meat.

Now, don't get me wrong, I am a lover of meat, especially my dear friend, bacon. However, I notice a huge difference when I turned the Paleo diet upside down and made my plates consist of 75-80% organic veggies, 10-15% pastured, grass-fed or wild-caught meat and 10% fats from avocados, olives, coconut oil, butter from pastured cows and from properly processed nuts and seeds.

You may need to tweak those percentages a bit for your own body but going veggie heavy is, in my opinion, the way to approach the Paleo beast. Believe in the intuition of YOUR body to let you know what feels best to it. Basically, all you need to do is eat real, whole food including organic fruits and veggies, healthy fats, pastured or wild-caught meats and nothing processed or packaged. It's not hard and it's so delicious and filling.

An amazing new resource—which I can't recommend enough—on how to tailor a Paleo diet to your own unique needs is Chris Kresser's [Your Personal Paleo Code](#). No one knows more about this stuff than Chris Kresser. (Who I have a big nerd crush on! He's a research geek and health detective just like myself. I'm not going to say I stalk him like I stalk Jon Hamm per se...but it's close.) After completing the four weeks of **The Radical TLC Solution: Thyroid & Autoimmune Meal Plan + Cookbook**, grab Chris' book and adapt the Paleo Plan to fit what's right for you

### **The Price of Paleo**

Sadly, the government subsidizes foods that aren't healthy for us and those that hinder healing. That's why junk food, fast food, soft drinks and chemically sprayed fruits and vegetables are so cheap. Is it really cheap though? The cost of eating the Standard American Diet is delayed; we pay for it in health care costs both individually and as a society when we spend trillions a year treating diabetes, heart disease, and other obesity related diseases. (If you're interested, you can read more about this terrible paradox in this excellent [article by Dr. Mark Hyman](#).)

But I get it: Paleo can get pricy. This is my [favorite guide](#) for maintaining a whole foods diet on a budget. Don't despair! It can be done. Make a plan and work it!

My friend and editor Lacy Boggs also has a great ebook called [The Ultimate Guide to Eating Organic on a Budget](#) that had tips even I had never thought of! While her guide isn't strictly Paleo, you can easily adapt her tips to this diet plan.

## THE SUPER SIMPLE TLC THYROID & AUTOIMMUNE DIET STRATEGY

So, now that we know more about the foods that are hurting you, creating a menu plan that's simple and healthy for you and your family is not as hard as you think. With a couple of tried and true tricks and a systematic approach, you can have healthy meals for you and your family in a snap!

Start by stocking your pantry first, as this is the foundation to eating healthy. If you don't have the right foods in ready supply, it's too simple to grab those pesky, problematic go-to foods when cravings rear their ugly heads or hunger arrives. (Except that you totally threw those out in the pantry purge, right? RIGHT?) ;) Having a pantry and refrigerator stocked with easy healthy food for you and your family is the way to go. See the next section for a sample list.

Next, create a master list of favorite foods and favorite recipes. Write down foods you love that also just happen to be healthy. It can be divided into categories—starchy vegetables, non-starchy vegetables, fruit, meats, nuts, canned and other. Under each category list of your favorite foods that you can pull from when creating your weekly menu.

From the favorites list, create a weekly menu plan including breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. For breakfasts, choose 1-3 favorites and rotate them throughout the week. For dinners, choose a starchy vegetable, a non-starchy vegetable, salad ingredients, and a meat to comprise the dinner meal. Choose a fruit off the favorites list for dessert and save the leftovers for lunch. Making enough dinner to allow for leftover lunch saves a ton of time when you add it up over a month and literally eliminates going out to lunch or cheating.

Creating a menu plan helps you save money, reduce food waste and creates a system so you only have to shop once a week. With the favorites list already created, it makes menu planning a snap! Want buy in from your kids? Let them in on the menu planning by giving them one or two days a week where they get to plan the meal from your list of healthy recipes. There are tons of good sites out there that provide Paleo and allergen-free recipes for kid favorites like pizza and chicken nuggets. So, let your kids in on the menu—they'll learn a system they can take with them to college and beyond and understand better how their food choices affect how they thrive and feel.

## Prepare to shop

Now, that you have your menu plan, preparing your grocery list will be a piece of cake (just don't add cake to your grocery list!). Just go through each meal and each day of your menu plan and write out the ingredients you need to create the meal. Having a list at the grocery store will keep you honest, on track, and will save you time while shopping. You'll end up buying healthier ingredients and keep those harmful foods out of your cart.

And be sure to only shop when you're full! Shopping while hungry is almost as dangerous as driving while intoxicated! (I kid.) You might also enlist friends or family members to take care of the kids so you can shop alone. I speak from experience that shopping with a whining child can make for poor choices. Play it safe if you can and leave the kiddos at home until they're older. However, it's never too soon to start teaching your kids about real food. Even as early as age 1, you can take your child around the grocery store and show them different fruits and vegetables and get your child to practice saying its name. Our son's first words after "mama" and "dada" were "olive tapenade." So it's never too soon to start giving them the appreciation and understanding of real food.

Having a healthy and simple menu plan for you and your family can make mealtime a breeze. It not only keeps your budget in check, it reduces food waste and time spent at the grocery store. And, don't forget the most important part—menu planning can help your waistline and general wellness so you can make good choices to support your health, energy and vitality.

## Sample Daily Menu Protocol

Here is the strategy I've created and used to repair leaky gut and reverse thyroid and autoimmune disease. It was inspired by the [GAPS protocol \(a must-read!\)](#) in combination with Nourishing Traditions and Paleo theories. This protocol is not absolute or rigid but a guideline of how to get the best and most nourishing foods into your system. A diet for reversing disease consists of unprocessed, whole foods. My rule of thumb—make 75% of your plate a mixture of raw and cooked veggies, 15% protein and 10% high quality fat. The best part—it's delicious and you don't have to count calories!

Are you a vegetarian? [What you need to know.](#)

For quick, simple and delicious 4 week meal plan and recipes, refer to ***The Radical TLC Solution: Your Favorite Thyroid & Autoimmune Meal Plan & Cookbook.***

## MENU PLAN CHEAT SHEET

	Breakfasts	Lunches	Dinners	Snacks
<b>Always :</b>	Eat 2 Brazil Nuts & drink a cup of Chicken or Beef Bone Broth	Drink fresh GreenJuice	Make a large enough dinner to have leftovers for lunch the next day. BIG time saver!	Make sure snacks have fat in them Yes, fat! Fat doesn't make you fat, sugar does.
<b>Choose one of these protein sources:</b>	Eggs, Bacon, Chicken, Turkey, Beef, Pork, Fish, Seafood, Lamb, Bison, Game Meat			*Nuts **Nut Butter **Hummus Deviled Eggs
<b>Choose two non-starchy vegetables:</b>	Celery Cucumber Chard **Eggplant Fennel Green onions Hearts of palm Jicama Lettuce (endive, romaine or iceberg) Shiitake Mushrooms Portobello Mushrooms Other Mushrooms		**Okra ****Onions Radishes Rhubarb Rutabaga **Spinach Swiss chard **Tomato Turnips Water chestnuts Watercress Zucchini	Carrot Sticks Fresh Salsa Guacamole (As well as any items from the Breakfasts, Lunches and Dinners Two Non Starchy Vegetables List)
<b>Choose one starchy vegetable:</b>	Carrots Red Potatoes Acorn Squash Butternut squash Yams		Parsnips Plantains Pumpkin Sweet Potatoes Taro	Plantain Chips Sweet Potato Chips Taro Chips
<b>Choose a fat:</b>	Olives Olive Tapenade Avocado Coconut Butter		Coconut Oil Pastured Butter Biodynamic Olive Oil	
<b>Choose a fruit: (in limited quantities)</b>				Apple Pear **Plums **Peaches Cherries **Strawberries Blueberries Raspberries ***Apricots ***Raisin ***Prunes ***Dates ***Figs**
* = favorite thyroid food	** = has some goitrogenic properties so limit amount or cook to limit goitrogenic properties	***=sugar alert—enjoy but don't overdo	****=FODMAP	*****=PUFA

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# WEEK 3

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## WEEK 3 HEALING PLAN

ACTION STEPS	DESCRIPTION
DAY 1	Read through the Week 3 Healing Plan.
DAY 2	Cut back on coffee and caffeine. Start by reducing your caffeine intake by half every few days. So, if you drink 1 cup of coffee per day, drink only ½ a cup for a few days, then to ¼ a cup for a few days, then none.
DAY 3	Take a break from alcohol for 21 days.
DAY 4	Get a massage—“doctor’s” orders! It’s not a “luxury,” it’s maintenance (seriously).
DAY 5	Establish your new nighttime routine. Choose 1 or 2 nightly rituals to prepare your body for sleep.
DAY 6	Reset your sleep schedule by going to bed by 10pm and waking at the same time every day.
DAY 7	Treat yo’self! Do one loving thing for yourself today.

## CATCHING ZZZZZ'S

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP FOR HEALING

How many times have you found yourself staring up at the ceiling in the middle of the night, praying that you could just fall asleep? You’re completely exhausted and your body needs to rest but nothing happens. And by nothing, I mean your thoughts race incessantly and you toss and turn as you try to will your body to sleep. Or, you sleep for 10 hours and still wake up completely exhausted. Does this sound like you?

There was a time when I hadn’t slept well in three years. I had a terrible time sleeping while I was pregnant, as my thyroid disease was undiagnosed, and then I didn’t have the chance to sleep for the first two years of my son’s life. Somehow, I kept getting up and making it through the day, but I was running on empty.

For our body to restore itself, we must rest fully each day. For some reason in our culture, we tend to pride ourselves on how much we're able to accomplish without having to sleep. When people have had a rough night, they sometimes engage in a competition as to who had the worst night sleep or who slept the least. It's as if it is a badge of honor or something to brag about. You know, the "I'm working harder" badge. But, this is no contest to win!

Poor sleep is a typical symptom for people with thyroid disorders and often it is just accepted as something you have to live with as part of having the disease. The problem is that insomnia or restless sleep must be addressed so that your endocrine system can be supported in order to heal.

We can't be flippant about a sleep disorder. Too often, it's accepted, solely medicated or totally disregarded. Discovering the most effective way to get to sleep and sleep well is a must for loving yourself back to health. Here's why:

1. Sleep loss can cause weight gain.
2. Lack of sleep can make you feel depressed.
3. Sleep deprivation can lead to serious health problems like heart disease, heart attack, heart failure, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes.
4. Lack of sleep affects libido.
5. Sleepiness impairs judgments and makes you prone to/causes accidents.
6. Sleep loss affects intellect and memory.
7. Lack of sleep ages your skin. (Yikes!)

Sound familiar? A lot of the symptoms of not getting enough sleep mirror the symptoms of thyroid and autoimmune disease, so you must make sure you're getting enough sleep to be sure that your symptoms aren't being caused or exacerbated by exhaustion.

### WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO KNOW?

- ***You should maintain a regular sleep-wake schedule.*** I did this by trying to go to bed 15 minutes earlier each night for 5 nights until I was able to fall asleep by 10pm. I also set my alarm for 6am each day so I could exercise. After 3 days on the 10pm–6am schedule, I was hooked and it was easy to stick to.
- ***Avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and other chemicals that interfere with sleep.*** I can't stress this enough. I know you're tired now in the morning so you like your cup of coffee but giving it up could be the difference between sleepless nights and sound rest. I went from drinking coffee several times a day to doing a caffeine detox. I don't need or crave caffeine anymore. It's pretty amazing.

- **Make your bedroom a comfortable sleep environment.** Keep your bedroom uncluttered and cozy with the right bedding, blankets and a heater (if you need it).
- **Establish a calming pre-sleep routine.** For instance, read something spiritual or meditative before bed. It's actually a great time to do a 10–15 minute meditation.
- **Go to sleep when you're tired Don't stay up to watch the end of that TV show or keep reading to finish a chapter.** Research shows that our body wakes itself up after 10pm. Once you're up later in the night, you'll get a second wind and may struggle with falling asleep altogether.
- **Keep lights low in the evening.** Bright household lights and light from computers and other electronic devices can disrupt messengers in your brain from eliciting the sleep response.
- **Don't nap close to bedtime.** Eating a light meal really helps with this one. If you eat a heavy, carb-laden dinner, you produce chemicals which will make you sleepy and want to take a nap. Taking a nap after dinner is gonna make it hard to fall asleep when it's best for your body

Six to eight hours of restful sleep each night is crucial for maximum rejuvenation. Interestingly, studies have shown that your body is able to rejuvenate better if you fall asleep in the hours before midnight. Meaning, if you are sleeping eight hours between 10pm–6am, you will feel more rested than if you slept eight hours between Midnight and 8am I can attest to that as I've tested it out myself. If I fall asleep by 10pm, I can jump out of bed at 6am and am actually energized enough to exercise. When I stay up late watching TV or reading and go to sleep at 11 or 11:30pm, I'll drag in the morning even if I'm sleeping the same amount of time.

I want you to try setting yourself a sleep schedule and sticking to it. If you feel resistance to this, ask yourself why. Make a list of the best excuses you can think of, and then ask yourself, "Is X more important than my health?" Be honest with yourself and remember that loving yourself enough to give yourself what you need is the key to supporting healing.

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# WEEK 4

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## WEEK 4 HEALING PLAN

ACTION STEPS	DESCRIPTION
DAY 1	Read through the Week 4 Healing Plan.
DAY 2	Buy a dry brush, some Epsom salts, a candle, and lavender essential oil.
DAY 3	Light that candle and take an Epsom salt bath.
DAY 4	Start dry brushing every morning before jumping in the shower or getting dressed.
DAY 5	Research where you can get cheap access to a sauna in your area—look into day spas, health clubs, gyms and community centers.
DAY 6	Try out a sauna and see how it feels to you.
DAY 7	Treat yo'self! Do one loving thing for yourself today.

## DAILY DETOX

As we've talked about, helping your body detox itself is key to promoting self-healing, and one easy way to improve your health is to implement a daily detox regime. Not only are these practices good for your body, they're good for your spirit, too, as you can approach each of them from a place of extreme self love and care. I love to look at these as part of my self-love routine.

### BATHS

When was the last time you treated yourself to a bath? Well, consider it an assignment! Shut the door, light a candle, and tell your family you're unreachable for the next half hour—it's for your health!

But before you dissolve into the warm water, be sure to add 2 cups of Epsom salts and ½ cup aluminum-free baking soda to the water (skip the soap or bubbles). Why? Among other benefits:

- Epsom salts improve the ability of the body to use insulin, reducing the incidence or severity of diabetes.
- They flush toxins and heavy metals from the cells, easing muscle pain and helping the body to eliminate harmful substances.
- They relieve stress. Excess adrenaline and stress are believed to drain magnesium, a natural stress reliever, from the body. Magnesium is necessary for the body to bind adequate amounts of serotonin, a mood-elevating chemical within the brain that creates a feeling of well being and relaxation.
- And they improve absorption of nutrients.
- Baking soda also helps draw out toxins from the body, too.
- It also keeps the blood at a healthy pH, whereby it is able to carry more oxygen so that the body can efficiently eliminate waste.
- Baking soda has also been found to optimize kidney function as well as chelate the body by removing heavy metals.
- Baths help raise your body temperature relieving your thyroid of doing all the work
- Baths can also help you sleep better. I recommend taking a bath two hours before bedtime.

So go ahead and lock the door and enjoy a bath!

## SAUNA

Saunas are another “luxurious” way to promote detoxification of your body. They need to be undertaken with care, but a sauna has a TON of benefits including:

- Skin rejuvenation.
- Enhanced sweating that gently and safely helps eliminate all heavy metals and toxic chemicals.
- Decongesting the internal organs and stimulating circulation.
- Inhibiting the sympathetic nervous system, enabling the body to relax, heal and regenerate itself much faster.
- Oxygenating and hydrating the cells and organs, and improving circulation.

And lots more!

See if your local gym, city recreation center, or health spa has a sauna that you can use. Sometimes even hotel spas will allow guests to use the facilities for a minimal cost.

When using the sauna, it's important to remember:

- Start with just 15–20 minutes. Some people really enjoy the sauna, but start slow to avoid side effects at first.
- Drink 8–16 ounces of pure water before you sauna.
- Wipe off your sweat with a small towel every few minutes. (That's where the toxins are!)
- Leave the sauna right away if you feel faint, if you stop sweating, if your face turns bright red, or if your heart starts to race. This could indicate overheating or heat stroke.
- Shower off after you sauna and use a very small amount of natural soap.

You can safely use the sauna as little as once or twice a week to start, up to as much as once or twice a day.

## DRY BRUSH

Do you know what your lymphatic system does? I didn't until mine stopped working.

Your lymphatic system is an extensive network that exists virtually everywhere in the body. It serves as the body's primary system of immunity as it functions to create immune cells. Like a cleaning crew, this system also flushes toxins out of the body and moves fat to the circulatory system.

Lymph, the clear liquid moved through the body via your lymphatic system is full of white blood cells (lymphocytes) which are your body's main tools when there is an immune response. Having an efficient and functioning lymphatic system is crucial to good health.

Dry brushing is a great way to stimulate your lymphatic system and my favorite way to start the morning. It's quick to do (takes about 5 minutes) and I swear, it's better than a cup of coffee. Yes, I just said that! BETTER THAN A CUP OF COFFEE.

When you dry brush, your skin becomes invigorated and your being is enlivened. Once, I'm finished dry brushing, I'm ready to start the day.

Here's why dry brushing is so good for you:

- It relaxes the nervous system. Although dry brushing can feel a little odd the first few times you try it, those bristles are helping to stimulate nerve endings in the skin which refreshes your nervous system and helps keep 'ya calm.
- It increases circulation, buffs and smoothes your skin and is touted to reduce the appearance of cellulite (I haven't done it enough yet to support that claim but you can bet your bum I'll tell you if it works!)
- It helps with nutrient absorption, removal of toxins and improves blood circulation. This helps you stay healthy and keeps your body running more efficiently—and is totally key for supporting your thyroid health.

Simple steps to dry brushing at home:

1. Buy a good [dry brush](#).
2. Make sure your skin is dry (best to do this before your bath or shower).
3. Begin from bottom and move upwards. You'll use gentle circular motions or longer smoother strokes or a combination of both. I like to do smooth strokes for the legs but round strokes for the ankles, knees, bum, tummy, and elbows.
4. Always start at your ankles and move toward your heart. Make sure to move the brush in the same direction.
5. When you get to your back, brush from the neck down instead, toward your lower back.
6. Be careful with sensitive skin and never brush over sores, shingles scars, sun burned areas or areas with skin cancer.

Now that I'm in the habit of dry brushing, I can't go a day without doing it. You'll notice its power too!

## MASSAGE

How often do you get a massage?

Massage is more than just a luxury. It's true that it's something you have to invest in, but as with so many of these healing steps, it's an investment in your long-term health and wellbeing.

Medical studies have revealed that even a 10 or 20 minute massage (the kind you can get at the grocery store or the mall!) can have therapeutic benefits including improving immune function, boosting circulation, reducing stress, reducing the time it takes to recover from injury, and alleviating pain. It can also reduce depression and anxiety and promote restful sleep patterns.

Massage also promotes circulation and the elimination of toxins from your body, which are key to improving your thyroid health.

And, massage is making its way into “mainstream” medical treatment. Some insurance policies now cover massage, and some massage chains (like Massage Envy) are adept at filing claims with your insurance company for you.

If the investment is a concern, look for a massage school in your area, which usually provide massage services at a discount. Or for heaven’s sake, enlist your sweetheart or a good friend.

And, whether you’re on a budget or just looking to include massage in your daily self-care routine, you can try these two self-massage techniques at home:

### **Self-Massage to Improve Sleep:**

- Place the three fingers of each hand on your eyebrows. Close your eyes and take a few deep, cleansing breaths.
- Using your middle fingers, start at the bridge of your nose and move along the line of your brows, rubbing small slow circles, all the way to your temples.
- Repeat several times, each time moving your fingers up a little ways until you are following your hair line.
- Follow your hair line all the way around the the nape of your neck, making small circles. Repeat this several times.
- Using the same circular movements, move from the nape of your neck down the back of your neck, on either side of (but not on) your spine.
- Start in the center of your forehead and make these circular movements back, across your scalp, to the nape of your neck.
- Finally, using your entire hand, knead your scalp gently.

### **Self Foot Massage:**

- It's best to start this right after a bath, but not totally necessary.
- Start in a comfortable sitting position with your right foot propped up on your left knee so that you can see the sole of your foot.
- Use a few drops of lotion or massage oil and wrap your hands around your foot. Using your thumbs, make strong circular motions from the heel of your foot all the way up to your toes.
- Use your thumbs to make long strokes with firm pressure from the heel up to the toes.
- One at a time, massage each toe, being sure to get in between toes as well. Give each toe a gentle tug to loosen the joint.
- Starting from the center of your heel, use your thumbs to press outward, and use your fingers to rub the tops of your foot at the same time.
- Gently rotate the foot in all directions, stretching your

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# WEEK 5

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## WEEK 5 HEALING PLAN

ACTION STEPS	DESCRIPTION
DAY 1	Read through the Week 5 Healing Plan.
DAY 2	Try 5 minutes of yoga today—go longer if it feels good!
DAY 3	Take a 5 minute walk outside today—go longer if it feels good!
DAY 4	Try <b>8 minute abs</b> today—try a second video in the series if it feels good!
DAY 5	Try <b>8 minute buns</b> today—try a second video in the series if it feels good!
DAY 6	Try <b>8 minute arms</b> today—try a second video in the series if it feels good! .
DAY 7	Treat yo'self! Do one loving thing for yourself today.

## FITNESS MATCHMAKER

When you're in the throes of hypothyroidism, sometimes it's unimaginable that you'll ever have the desire to exercise again. Then comes the weight gain. You've tried everything but you can't seem to lose weight so you decide to dedicate yourself and try out all those high-impact exercise programs that help your friends lose weight. You know the ones, they're fun. They involve pushing it to the max—cross training, running, aerobics, dancing, high intensity.

Your determination is fierce. Initially, you feel great. With every bead of sweat, your endorphins kick in, your mood elevates and you begin to feel like yourself again. But then you crash—you fail to lose weight, you find yourself battling fatigue, irritability and colds and flus.

You may actually gain weight. You're confused. This seems completely counterintuitive especially since many of us are even happy if we can drag our little bums out to exercise on those high fatigue days but exercising too much can not only keep you from healing, it can make your situation worse.

### **How can exercise be harmful to my health?**

While it IS important to incorporate daily exercise into your routine for healing and good health, studies show that over-exercising can actually deplete your system. Exercising too much increases inflammation, depresses immunity, depletes hormones, slows healing and can lead to bone loss. If you're trying to manage a thyroid disease, all of these factors can work against your healing. You can actually burn yourself out.

### **Easy does it.**

If you have a low functioning thyroid, studies have shown that athletic performance is affected in several ways. Hypothyroidism creates more weakness in the muscles and cramping. It also impairs cardiac function and blood flow (I'm sure you've felt that before). In addition, hypothyroidism dampens the body's ability to use fatty acids for energy which limits your endurance.

When you over-train, it causes your body to pump out extra cortisol (the stress hormone) which has been linked to increased belly fat, bone loss, muscle breakdown, sugar cravings (holla!). It can also lead to insulin resistance which is a pre-diabetic condition that causes high blood sugar. We already have too many stress inducing stimuli in our current daily lives. All of this contributes to adrenal fatigue, which you may already be experiencing because of leaky gut, daily stress, food intolerances, and yeah, your thyroid.

Don't let exercise, which should be a force for healing, be another thing that creates stress in the body. This isn't about punishing your body or forcing it into a new shape; it's about loving your body and respecting that it was designed to move.

How much exercise is too much? Since everyone's body is different, this varies from person to person. Listen to your body. What signals are you receiving? Are you gaining weight, fatigued, experiencing low stamina and sleep disturbances? Are your symptoms getting worse? Those are good clues.

You'll know you've found the right balance when you get a boost of energy and an overall sense of well being. You should not want to collapse after exercise. You should experience a comfortable level of muscle soreness, mental focus and good mood if you are exercising in your personal fitness zone.

**Important takeaway:** You need daily, low-impact exercise and sufficient rest between exercise sessions to help you get fitter faster and to avoid compromising your thyroid health.

Just exercising as little as 5-minutes a day can make a substantial impact on your overall health.

Look for opportunities to squeeze in exercise—before you jump in the shower, while you're waiting for the kids to eat, while you're waiting for your water to boil, in between meetings, during your lunch break, while waiting in a long line, etc. There are many opportunities throughout the day while we're killing 5 minutes that you can use to exercise.

### **Five minute fitness**

Here are five different exercises that you can do in 5-minutes or less:

- 1. Leg lifts**—Stand with your legs parallel, lift your right leg back and squeeze your buns. Do this 20+ times and switch to the other leg. I do this one all the time while I wait in line at the grocery store, the bank, anywhere really. It's kind of discreet and plus it keeps weirdos from encroaching on your space while you wait in line. This lengthens and strengthens your legs while toning the tush.
- 2. Push-ups (full or half)**—These work the chest, shoulders, chest, triceps, back and core.
- 3. Pull-ups & Chin-ups**—Full disclosure, I never do these. BUT my husband bought one of those hideous contraptions that hooks to the top of the doorway. Pull-ups and chin-ups work the upper body and if you can perform 1 pull-up and 2 chin-ups in 5-minutes a day, you will transform your arms and chest quickly. While the machine might not be lovely, my husband's chest certainly is!
- 4. Squats**—I dread squats but they are a powerhouse for toning the legs. There's no question that when I do them regularly, my legs and buns firm up super quickly. Squats workout your core, quads, hamstrings and calves.
- 5. Run**—Grab your iPod and put on a favorite song or two. Take a run outside or jog in place for 5 minutes. You'll relieve stress, tone your legs and feel refreshed.

My favorite fast full-body workout, though, is yoga. Here's a [5-minute yoga](#) practice that works out your entire body. Whenever I'm pressed for time, I'll do this series for 5 minutes and within days my muscles are toned and more defined...not to mention it clears my mind, gives me time to breathe and helps me start the day refreshed and focused.

## Rebounding

Ever heard of the exercise known as rebounding? You probably did it when you were a kid—without even knowing it! Rebounding is basically just bouncing on a trampoline or rebounder. It's low-impact aerobic exercise that can jump-start your metabolism (pun intended!)—oh, and P.S. It's pretty fun!

Rebounding is gentle enough for people who suffer from thyroid disorders and other chronic fatigue disorders, but it's powerful enough to get your blood pumping and your body working. Plus, it helps your body detoxify by stimulating the lymphatic system and sweating out the toxins.

According to EvolutionHealth.com, rebounding reduces your body fat; firms your arms, legs, thighs, abdomen, and hips; increases your agility; strengthens your muscles overall; provides an aerobic effect for your cardiopulmonary systems; rejuvenates your body when it's tired, and generally puts you in a state of mental and physical wellness. Wow!

That's a lot of goodness from this one simple exercise. You can find an [affordable rebounder here](#) and store it under your bed or in the closet. Mine sits in our closets and I hop on it for a minute or two before getting dressed in the morning.

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# WEEK 6

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## WEEK 6 HEALING PLAN

ACTION STEPS	DESCRIPTION
DAY 1	Read through the Week 6 Healing Plan.
DAY 2	Buy a journal that catches your eye and get a nice pen or pencil.
DAY 3	<p>Take out your journal and answer these questions in your journal today. Write for yourself and no one else. Don't pay attention to punctuation or spelling. Just write.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am grateful for. (list 3 things)</li> <li>2. What gets to change in my life when I heal? (Write for 5 minutes on this. Don't think, just write.)</li> <li>3. What has been aggravating me, making me angry, sad, hurt, ashamed or depressed in my life? (Let it rip! write for 10 minutes or more. Write it out, from your heart.)</li> </ol>
DAY 4	Look at your schedule and commit to a time every day that you're going to set aside to write. Get in the habit of writing 10 minutes a day. Take the journal out and write anything you want—a letter, a poem, random words, a story or use one of Rory's prompts (see below). Even if you write, "I have nothing to say today," over and over again, the words will start flowing. Trust me, this works like a charm!
DAY 5	Share your health goals and ask 1 person for help today.
DAY 6	Sit quietly with your eyes closed and just breathe for 5 minutes straight today. Set a timer so you don't have to wonder about the time.
DAY 7	Treat yo'self! Do one loving thing for yourself today.

# REDUCING STRESS & BECOMING A TIME MANAGEMENT NINJA

We all have stress in our lives whether it comes from our jobs, our circumstances, our finances or challenges with our family and friends. Some days I imagine myself as a superhero using a shield to defend and deflect everything that's trying to attack my mind and body.

But living in a state of constant stress is quite possibly the worst thing you can do for your thyroid, autoimmune or inflammatory condition. Many times, we accept stress into our lives that is unnecessary. It's important to understand what stress really does to the thyroid and techniques for keeping stress at bay.

As we've already covered, stress greatly affects the adrenal glands, and that is directly related to the health of your thyroid. The adrenal glands secrete hormones (cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine) to regulate the stress response. When it comes to your thyroid, the ways in which our adrenal glands respond has far reaching consequences.

Beyond the obvious daily stressors in our lives, the adrenal glands pump out more stress hormones when your blood sugar isn't regulated, your gut is leaky, you have food sensitivities (such as gluten), toxins and infections are present, or you are inflamed and under an autoimmune attack. You can't look at one without the other and adrenal stress could possibly be the most important component.

Adrenal stress creates a host of symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, insomnia, mood swings, sugar and caffeine cravings, irritability and dizziness. It also affects how your hormones are used by your cells, reduces the conversion of T4 to T3, weakens immune barriers, causes hormonal imbalances, promotes the autoimmune response and disrupts the interactions between the hypothalamus, pituitary and adrenal glands. This affects how you react to stress or trauma, your temperature, digestion, immune system, mood, libido and energy. In fact, weak adrenal glands can mimic symptoms of thyroid disease—whether you actually have thyroid disease or not!

You get the point. You need to kick stress to the curb. Maybe you didn't realize this but so often we continue to attack our adrenals and ourselves by actually accepting stress into our lives. "Accept stress into my life," you wonder? "But I don't accept stress. Stress just finds me. It surrounds me...."

Here are some ways you may accept stress into your life:

1. You let other people's problems become your problems
2. You insist on doing everything yourself
3. You let other people dictate your schedule
4. You feel guilty that you're "not doing enough"
5. You don't ask for the support that you need

When you're dealing with a health challenge such as a thyroid or autoimmune disease, it's absolutely imperative to minimize stress and ask for help. You need at least an hour a day to do something you enjoy, take care of yourself or nurture your spirit.

And let's take a second right here to address that guilt trip that just popped up in your brain: It is not greedy to make any changes you need to support your health. Please remember that loving yourself comes in many different forms. This can be one of the hardest hurdles my clients tackle, but also one of the most important.

### **DON'T LET OTHER PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS BECOME YOUR PROBLEMS**

Other people's problems are NOT yours. Their "emergencies" are NOT for you to solve. You have plenty on your plate to deal with right now.

You need to create some healthy, loving boundaries, because right now is not the time to take on others' problems. You need to carve out time for yourself. Right now, you're the one who needs support.

Any time a new commitment comes up or someone needs help, ask yourself, "Will the world explode if I don't do this? Do I really need to do this now?" You'd be surprised at how many things you don't really need to participate in. Be firm with anyone trying to suck your time. Tell them that right now you have to take time to honor your health and cannot take on any commitments at this time. Be the guardian of your schedule and STAY FIRM.

### **Remember that enough is enough**

You know how it feels—you are greeted in the morning by a thick blanket of fatigue. You hardly want to lift your body up to get out of bed, let alone address the day's commitments. When your body goes haywire due to a thyroid disorder, your world gets turned upside down. The simplest task feels impossible to do so you start hiding from your "to-do's" and pair your schedule down a bit. And then the guilt comes in. You're not doing all that was once expected of you. You feel like a failure in your career, as a spouse, a friend or as a parent.

Here's the problem though....guilt physiologically creates a boat load of stress for your body. It creates anxiety in the mind which, in turn, creates stress in your system.

You don't need to feel guilty. What you do need to do is heal! So please stop feeling guilty. [Daring Greatly](#) by Bréne Brown is a great place to start if you are dealing with feelings of guilt or shame.

Now is not the time to be a superhero. Now is the time to redesign your life for optimal healing. Once you're healed, you can go back to leaping tall buildings in a single bound (if you actually want to). For now, you need to release yourself from guilt and ask for the help you need.

## FINDING YOUR VOICE

Almost all of the clients I see for thyroid and autoimmune disease have very similar characteristics. (I am including myself in this group!)

- They are type-A people who put pressure on themselves to do it all.
- They are nurturers who take care of everyone else; often putting their own needs on the back burner.
- Most of them are self-admitted control freaks.
- Although type-A, they tend to really be shy, timid, or insecure. They worry about what others think of them.
- They tend to avoid conflict at all costs. They don't feel safe or comfortable in arguments and feel easily overpowered by others.
- When they try to confront others, they are either so choked up or blocked that • They often feel isolated from others, even family. They often feel that there are things they cannot share about themselves, such as their beliefs or life choices, and they have to hide who they really are because they want the love and approval of others.
- They may have experienced abuse or felt embarrassed by family members and felt they had to keep things hidden from others.
- They tend to be chatty Cathy's and drain their energetic reserves when in contact with others.
- They often crave attention and need to feel listened to, appreciated, and understood.
- Because they have challenges in expressing themselves directly, they tend to feel angry or resentful towards others because they cannot confront them and **they feel like they don't have a voice.**

From an emotional and energetic perspective, thyroid dysfunction is a disorder of the 5th chakra, or your body's center of communication. The 5th chakra gets blocked when we don't speak our truths and we don't speak up for ourselves. Due to this lack of open expression, the 5th chakra gets blocked so, energetically, it will

manifest itself as a thyroid disorder. When you don't communicate your feelings, when you squash what's inside, your body reacts in ways to make you notice and put you back in balance. When you have Hashimoto's/autoimmune thyroiditis, your body is literally attacking itself. You are attacking your thyroid, the seat of communication.

It makes sense, then (in a spiritual, bigger picture kind of way) that finding and using your voice, both literally and figuratively, can provide relief to your embattled thyroid. For me, getting back to singing as a hobby was a game changer. But you have to discover your own ways to find and use your voice.

## ASK FOR HELP

### How You Do One Thing Is How You Do Everything

Take a moment to let that sink in...

How you do ONE thing, is how you do EVERYTHING. This applies to so many facets our lives, but for thyroid sufferers in particular, we have a way of taking on too much—all the time. THAT one thing is how we do EVERYTHING.

- Do you find yourself constantly putting your own needs aside and taking care of someone else in almost every area of your life?
- Do you always put your children's needs ahead of your own?
- Are you trying to fulfill the emotional needs of a significant other or friend instead of your own?
- Do you find yourself caring more about a coworker, a family member or even the cashier at your local store than yourself?
- Do you try to make people feel comfortable instead of speaking up or telling the truth?

I know I mentioned this point before when I discussed the ways we accept stress into our lives, but it bears repeating again since it is so vital to healing. When we feel we need to do EVERYTHING ourselves and constantly put our needs below those of other people, we are not honoring our value. It's no surprise that the place our bodies are attacking us is in our throat. Our needs, desires, wants (dare I say, "voice") is not being heard. And we're partly to blame. We're not letting it be heard and here is why that can be detrimental.

In today's society, our to-do lists are completely stacked. What if you didn't take the responsibility to do everything on those lists yourself? How will you get it ALL done, you wonder? Here's a tip—put your kids to work! For example, a 7-year old can put the clean dishes away. A 10-year old can help you prepare food for dinner. A 12-year old can be doing the laundry. There are many great websites that list out age appropriate tasks for children to do. Giving children responsibilities empowers them, teaches new skills and takes items off your to-do list! You also get to work with your family as a team to complete tasks while enjoying quality time together as well. So, hide those video games and put the youngins to work! [Click here](#) for a list of age appropriate household tasks your children can do.

Don't have a litter of children to help you with your household chores? Ask a friend to support you while you heal by helping you with the groceries, picking up dry cleaning, running an errand. Your friends, work buddies and family are there to help you. All you need to do is explain that you need support in order to heal and ask for their help. There are many tasks out there that don't really require your expertise. Hand over the reins to someone else who can help.

Ask for help! Look at your schedule and see what can be delegated. The next step gives some ideas on how.

- Talk to the people in your life about your situation and how you need support. Ask your boss if you can offload some smaller work tasks to an intern or assistant. (Be sure to explain to that person what is going on with you so they understand why you need the extra help—the sample letter in the introduction can help.)
- Find someone to share carpool responsibilities. This should buy you some time each day between work and home for yourself to take care of your body and your mood.
- Swap childcare—my husband and I do this. We each get a block of 2–3 hours during the weekend for ourselves while the other one watches our son. It's free "babysitting" and it allows us each to have quality time alone with our child and quality time alone for ourselves. If you are a single parent, swap childcare with a friend, neighbor, or coworker. Schedule a standing day every week where each of you gets to have time to yourselves. This is not time for running errands. This is your time to treat your body well and heal. Get a massage! Read a book or magazine. Relax and de-stress!

## TAKE BACK YOUR SCHEDULE

I know, you've got a job, you've got kids or you've got a host of outside commitments. What time in the day is actually for you? Well, unfortunately, in this society, no one is going to hand you a block of time. We don't live in a culture of daily siestas. We have to actually make a decision to take control and carve out time for ourselves.

When we're over-scheduled and running on adrenaline, we tax our bodies and create more stress. How do you get a handle on it all? You empower yourself by realizing that this is YOUR life and you need to design it for yourself. Yes, there are obligations that can't be avoided but there are ways to redefine your schedule to promote overall health and wellness.

You just have to take a hard look at your commitments and see where you are losing time, how you can be more efficient, and what kind of support you need to ask for. Can you ask your boss if you can work from home a few days a week? Can you run all your errands on one day instead of driving back and forth all week? What areas in your life can you tweak your schedule so that you are in control of it instead of the other way around?

One of the first exercises I do with my clients is to take a step back, breathe, and look at their schedule. I present them with a blank schedule ([click here for The Time Management Ninja Maker](#)) and have them fill out everything they do on a given day on the first schedule. Then we go over it with a fine-tooth comb.

Where are the redundancies in the week? Where can things be done more efficiently? Where are areas you can find support with your work? (e.g.—Can someone else pick up your kids once or twice a week so you can go to the gym?) Together, my client and I figure out where best to make changes to the schedule so they can pursue their passions as well as take care of the day-to-day hullabaloo.

### **Fresh Tips:**

Once you've infused your schedule with a little life, use these tricks to stay on track:

1. Get a calendar or organizer and WRITE IT DOWN. When you're out and about, it's hard to keep track of things and easy to forget to include them on the schedule once you're home. Use the calendar on your phone or a planner to jot down a new task and designate a time to do it in your schedule right away. This way, you just have to follow your schedule and not worry that you might be forgetting something.
2. Don't take on everything! Instead of saying yes to everything and everyone, consider whether or not you have to be the one to actually attend or do the work for such-and-such. Also, look at your schedule and make sure that adding this task to your calendar won't be taking away from something that brings you a moment of peace, health or joy. I tell my clients to guard their schedules like a superhero. (There's a lot of talk of superheroes in my house these days with a 5-year old) Imagine you have a shield that deflects any time suckers from making their way to your schedule.
3. Use the "5-minute rule" on things that just pop up—if you can get something done in 5 minutes or less, do it. If it's going to take more than 5 minutes, designate a time to complete it and put it on your schedule immediately. Set it and forget it.

## JOURNALING

One of my beloved doctors suggested journaling as a path for my personal healing, and I balked. Then, two years ago, I enrolled in the [Write to Be You](#) course by Rory Green. It was life-changing.

I always hated to write, would never consider myself a good writer or even a writer but my osteopath recommended I begin to journal as a method for healing. Journaling changed the way I saw myself and the world.

Not only do I write, I am a regular contributor as a health expert for several publications. I am more confident, better able to work through conflicts and I relieve a lot of stress and challenging emotions through journaling. This is one of the best ways to not only manage stress but to find your voice.

In fact, medical studies have begun to find evidence of the health benefits of journaling—everything from reducing symptoms of chronic health problems (hello!) to reducing anxiety, depression, and stress.

On [Rory's blog](#), you can find several writing prompts to get you started. Don't think...just write. You'll be amazed at what comes out and how it can help you heal.

## MEDITATION

I know lots of people are intimidated by meditation, but it doesn't have to be I know lots of people are intimidated by meditation, but it doesn't have to be difficult—and you certainly don't have to be seeking enlightenment to try it!

Meditation has been shown to have all kinds of health benefits. Many practitioners believe that the root of all illness is in the mind, and when we clear our "mental pollution" the body is better able to heal itself.

When our psyche and nervous system are stressed, our body can't function at its optimal level, and it can't heal itself as easily or as well as it should. By meditating, we can relieve that stress and give our body the space and resources it needs to heal.

To start meditating, you can use an app or MP3 to guide you, or just practice sitting and being. Yes, it'll feel weird and uncomfortable at first! We're not really used to sitting still with our thoughts. But like all things, it gets easier as you practice.

**Try this:**

- Sit in a quiet, peaceful environment at a time when you won't be disturbed. First thing in the morning is great, but any time you can find is perfect.
- Get rid of distractions. Turn off the TV. Silence your phone. Put on soothing music if you like.
- Find a comfortable place and position to sit. On the ground is great. Use cushions and pillows to make yourself comfortable. And if you can't sit on the floor, there's no reason you can't sit in a chair or even on your bed; spine straight, hands on legs, chest open.
- Start with just 5 minutes a day. Set a timer. Try to work yourself up to 20 minutes per day.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breath. Try to just focus on breathing in and out.
- But when thoughts come (and they will!) release them without judgment. I like to picture a river and I set each thought in a little boat in the river and send it away.

# Building Your Healing Plan

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Now that you're armed with the information you need to nurture your body back to health, crafting your own healing plan will be a snap. Here are the steps to creating your own unique healing program:

1. Make a list of friends, family, colleagues, neighbors, etc. who you know would be willing to actively support you in kicking thyroid, autoimmune or inflammatory disease to the curb.
2. Next to his/her name, write out the ways they could (or you wish they would) help you.
3. Now open the [Time Management Ninja Maker](#). Write or type in the absolutely fixed "to-do's" in your life, like work, school, shuttling kids to practices, preparing nourishing food for yourself or your family.
4. Once those are in, take a moment to see if there are any opportunities for you to find support to free up some time. For instance, can you split carpool responsibilities with someone or can a friend, family member or neighbor watch the kids so you can get time to journal, be in nature or exercise? Can you and your colleague take turns bringing in fresh, home-cooked meals or salads for each other for lunch? Can you and a neighbor or friend take turns hosting simple family dinners or pitch-ins so neither of you are responsible for getting dinner on the table every night. We're looking for opportunities to create larger pockets of time for self-care here so start noodling and get creative.
5. Now it's time to actually ask for help. Reach out to your friends, family, colleagues and neighbors. Tell them that you're tired of being in the grips of this depleting disease and ask if they will commit to supporting you for the next few months so you can get back to being your normal, happy, vibrant self. Then, specifically let them know the different ways they could provide support. If you need help getting the conversation started, use the letter I provided in the introduction section as your guide.
6. Next, list out all the techniques from this guide that you'd like to continue to implement to support your healing. So, if you want to include time in your schedule for things like dry brushing, sauna, epsom salt baths, massage, fitness, or anything else, type or write those into your schedule.

7. Make sure to carve out time each day for the following in your new healing schedule:

- Stress Reduction: 10 minutes for meditation/breathing exercises
- Fitness: 30 minutes for light exercise
- Detox: 30 minutes for a daily Epsom salt bath or sauna
- Self-love: 10 minutes for writing in your journal
- Brain reboot: 10 minutes for a walk outside or around the office mid-day
- R & R: 30 minutes for something playful (doing a hobby, horsing around with your kids, dancing to your favorite music, watching a funny TV show, trading massages with your honey, something that will make you laugh and smile)

I'm asking you to commit to yourself for 2 out of 24 hours every day so you can feel better, have the energy to do all the things you want to do and be the friend, parent, partner, colleague, son/daughter you have been wanting to be.

8. If you're like me, my mind is in a million places and my schedule is generally fuller than I'd like. We live in a society that doesn't reward family or chill time like they do in my beloved Italy. So, what I do to make sure I can actually remember to do all the wonderful things I want to do to support my health is to add alarms to my phone's calendar. I have a daily alarm for fitness, going outside, meditating, reading and journaling. I even have alarms that say, "practice Italian!" and "tap dance class" (yes, I'm a nerd). This is so I remember to make the things that I LOVE to do a priority. Those all go on the schedule and get an alarm. Setting an alarm can bring you right back into the present moment with reminders of what's truly important to you so that you can remember to do those things for yourself instead of getting mired down by doing the bills, dishes, laundry or working around the clock. You owe it to yourself to make your health and happiness a priority.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T FIND THE TIME TO DO EVERYTHING I WANT TO DO?

First, review your schedule again and make sure that only mission critical to-dos are taking up your schedule (things like work). If something doesn't ABSOLUTELY have to be done and can be taken off the schedule, put it on hold for another time when you're feeling better (or better yet, delegate it) and you can back down on your healing schedule a bit.

The other thing to consider is that you can add these new lifestyle techniques into your schedule a little more slowly. Add one thing at a time and as you heal, you can incorporate other healing techniques in its place. Remember though, the first things to cut out of your schedule are the non-essentials. Make sure you are truly obligated to a task before putting it before of your own self-care and healing.

Do you have to be at EVERY soccer practice and if so, can you use that time to do some of your own fitness by walking around the field or track? Look for opportunities throughout your schedule to combine self-care activities with those “must-dos.” You’ll be amazed at what you can accomplish and you may just inspire others to do the same.

Ok, you’ve got your schedule filled with everything you need to reverse thyroid, autoimmune or inflammatory disease—so go on now, get to it!

Oh, and P.S. YOU DID IT. If you’ve been working through this book, implementing one step at a time, you’ve taken some incredible steps towards healing your body. Healing doesn’t happen all at once, but the more you keep up these new habits, the more changes you will see.

You should be so proud of yourself! And I couldn’t be more excited of you.

## A BIG THANKS!

Can I just take a second here to thank you?

Thank you for taking this big step toward reclaiming your health and taking back your life again.

Why am I thanking you? Because this show of love for yourself is beyond meaningful to me. It is my personal mission to inspire, educate and empower our community to take back our health and our lives. And you are a part of this mission, because I hope every person I help will become an evangelist for this deep truth: Thyroid, autoimmune and inflammatory diseases can be reversed and symptoms can be eradicated. There's no reason for people to suffer as I did—lost in a sea of misinformation with nowhere to turn.

I am so honored to be a part of your healing journey and grateful for the opportunity to be of support to you.

I would also like to thank you for having the courage to believe in yourself. If this program is the first step you've taken towards healing yourself, I know how big of a step that was.

If you find that you need to take your healing further, have specific questions that weren't addressed here, or just need additional support on your journey, please reach out for personal 1-to-1 coaching.

I work with people as a coach, partner, physician liaison, patient advocate and health detective to ensure that we are doing everything possible to reach your optimal state of health.

Beyond personal coaching, I also host private and group healing retreats in California's beautiful wine country, Italy and other spectacular places around the globe, where we can commune with nature, with one another, and with ourselves on the road to better health.

If I can continue to be of service to you—or someone you know—in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out. Until then, I'll see you in our online community!

 Jen