

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting in a hammock outdoors. The man is on the left, smiling with his eyes closed, and the woman is on the right, smiling and looking towards him. They are holding hands. The background shows trees and a bright sky. A large teal circle is overlaid on the top left of the image, containing the text.

Live  
well  
age well

Our Naturopath's holistic guide  
for helping you age softly

Taking care of  
*your*  
health is an  
important part  
of living a well,  
fulfilled life.



We've all heard that prevention is easier than managing symptoms. These days, we're enjoying longer lifespans, and we want to spend that extra time on our hands feeling as good as possible.

For most of us, this looks like having ample energy during the day that seamlessly transitions into an easy, restorative sleep at night. We also want to be able to move our bodies with ease and navigate life's ups and downs with resilience and overall optimism.

And while there are some things we're admittedly happy to leave in the past, there are other qualities that we do want to retain and build upon. This is where we need to get a bit strategic, so we are actively creating and nurturing a body that will carry us through the rest of our lives.

Luckily, there are plenty of ways everybody and 'every body' can be looked after. This guide will highlight some of the ways we can feel fit, strong, mentally well, and full of energy – no matter what stage of life we're in.



Your HealthPost Naturopath  
and Medical Herbalist

*Callan Rose*

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# Bloating & *digestion*

Our digestion can prove a little less efficient as we get older. This can result in less nutrients making it to our cells which can impact our energy levels and overall zest for life. Here are some indications that your digestion might need a helping hand:

- Feeling full and never really feeling hungry
- Bloating
- Burping or farting
- Changes in bowel motions
- Less energy
- Sleep changes

If you think your digestion needs some support, we've got lots of options to keep you going.



One of the best ways to support digestion and get more nutrients from our food is to boost the amount of enzymes in our diet. Enzymes are found naturally in fresh foods like pineapple, raw fruit and vegetables, and we can also get support in the form of capsules. Aiming to get your 5+ a day of fresh fruit and vegetables is a fantastic strategy to have an enzyme-rich diet.

You could also include naturally fermented foods like kombucha, kefir, or sauerkraut for an enzyme-rich, probiotic boost. Eating more fresh foods can provide great digestive system support, which will lend to healthy energy levels and digestive comfort.



## FIRED UP DIGESTION

Sometimes, food (and acids) goes in the wrong direction back up the oesophagus causing heat and discomfort. When that happens, it's greatly appreciated having a product on hand that can guide things to where they should be and support comfort in the stomach.

Our stomach is supposed to be in an acidic state (a pH of about 1.5 – 2) in order to chemically break down the food we're eating. This acidic state has multiple functions including supporting our immune system by killing bacteria in the food we eat, breaking our food down into small and easily digestible parts, and even supporting the absorption of important vitamins like B12.



## TIPS FOR DIGESTIVE SUPPORT

1. Support comfort in the digestive tract in the form of soothing herbs like liquorice, chamomile, or slippery elm.
2. Support the way the stomach empties into the small intestine and support the sphincter between the oesophagus and stomach. You can do this by addressing common triggers for digestive imbalances.

The usual suspects are things like alcohol, coffee, chocolate, spicy and/or fatty foods. Take note of what your triggers are and use that information to create a diet that supports digestive comfort.

Portion sizes can also play a part in digestive comfort, so practicing mindful eating in order to not over fill your stomach could be a helpful strategy.



## BOWEL REGULARITY

Ideally, you should be passing a decent sized (30cm long or so) soft stool every single day. This means food should take around 24 hours to travel through your whole digestive system. If it takes less time, there's a chance you're not absorbing nutrients efficiently.

If it takes longer, stools may become harder to pass and there may be other digestive discomfort associated with that, like bloating and gas.

Getting enough sleep, exercise, fibre and water are key to supporting healthy bowel movements. Other helpful strategies include probiotics and herbs that support healthy digestive flow.





## WHAT YOUR BOWEL MOTIONS CAN TELL YOU:

### If bowel motions contain food particles...

Your food is not being broken down properly, or it is not spending enough time in your digestive system. You might need to chew it more, take enzymes, increase fresh foods, and/or support your stress response.

### If bowel motions are loose...

There has not been enough time in your bowel for the water to be reabsorbed. It may be stress related (also triggered by caffeine), or you may have eaten something that disagrees with you. If you suspect a tummy bug, get along to see a doctor.

### If bowel motions are dry and hard to pass...

There has been too much time in your bowel and too much water has been reabsorbed. This may mean you need to increase fibre from fruit and vegetables, increase water, and possibly reduce meat until regularity returns to normal.

### If bowel motions float...

You might need help absorbing dietary fat. Taking a digestive enzyme containing lipase will provide targeted support in healthy fat digestion.



# Brain support

Getting older doesn't have to mean losing mental sharpness. If retaining healthy cognitive function is important to you, we're happy to say there's lots of options to support an aging brain. An option that stands out is Lion's Mane. This functional mushroom is known for its ability to support our brains to learn and retain information.

As well as this, it provides all the holistic qualities you'd find in other functional mushrooms, like gut and immune support, which all lend to feeling good and thinking clearly.

Plus, it's incredibly versatile – you can add it to hot or cold drinks, soups, baking, anything you can think of. If this sounds like you, Lion's Mane could be a 'roar-some' addition to your daily routine.



# Healthy

movement  
& energy

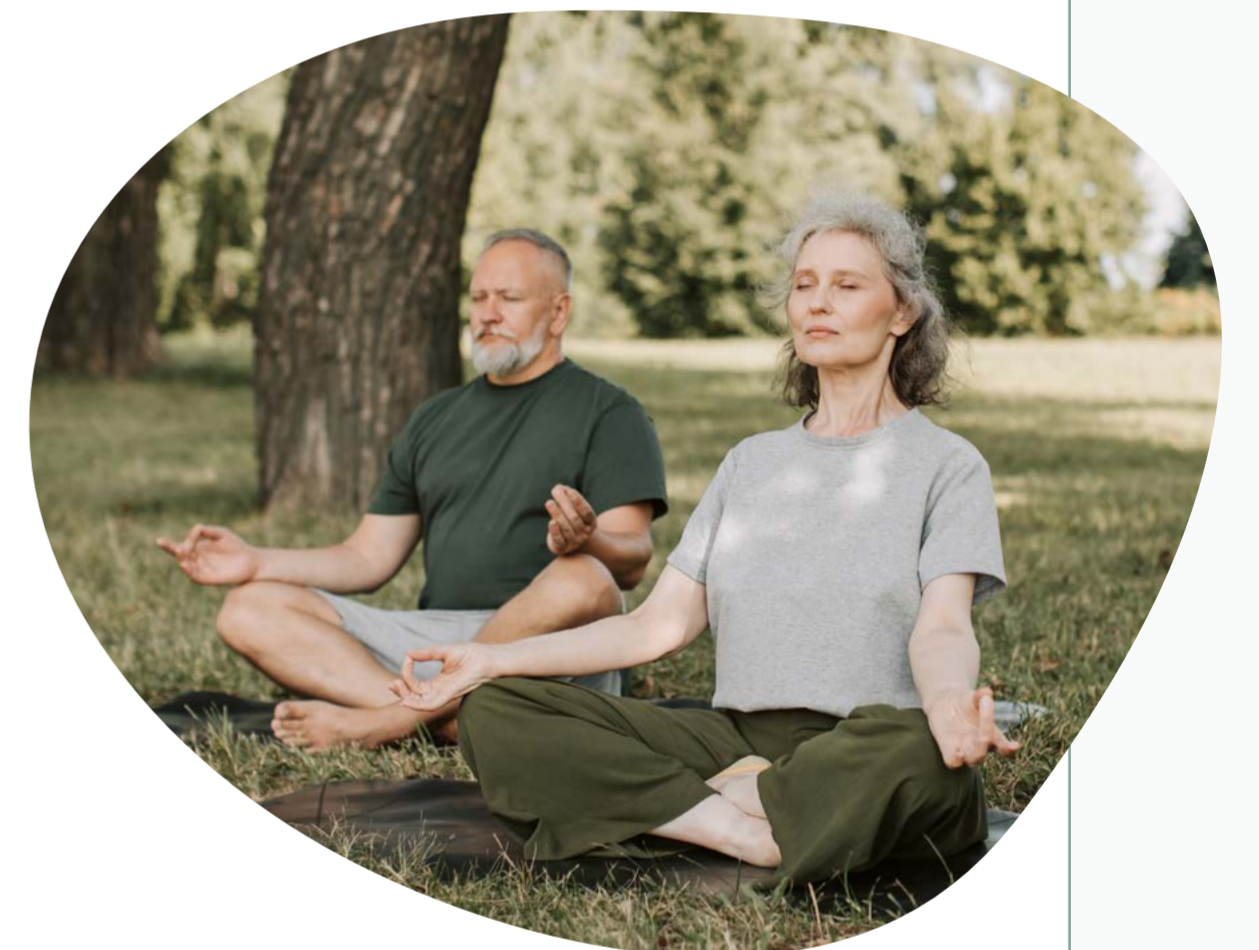
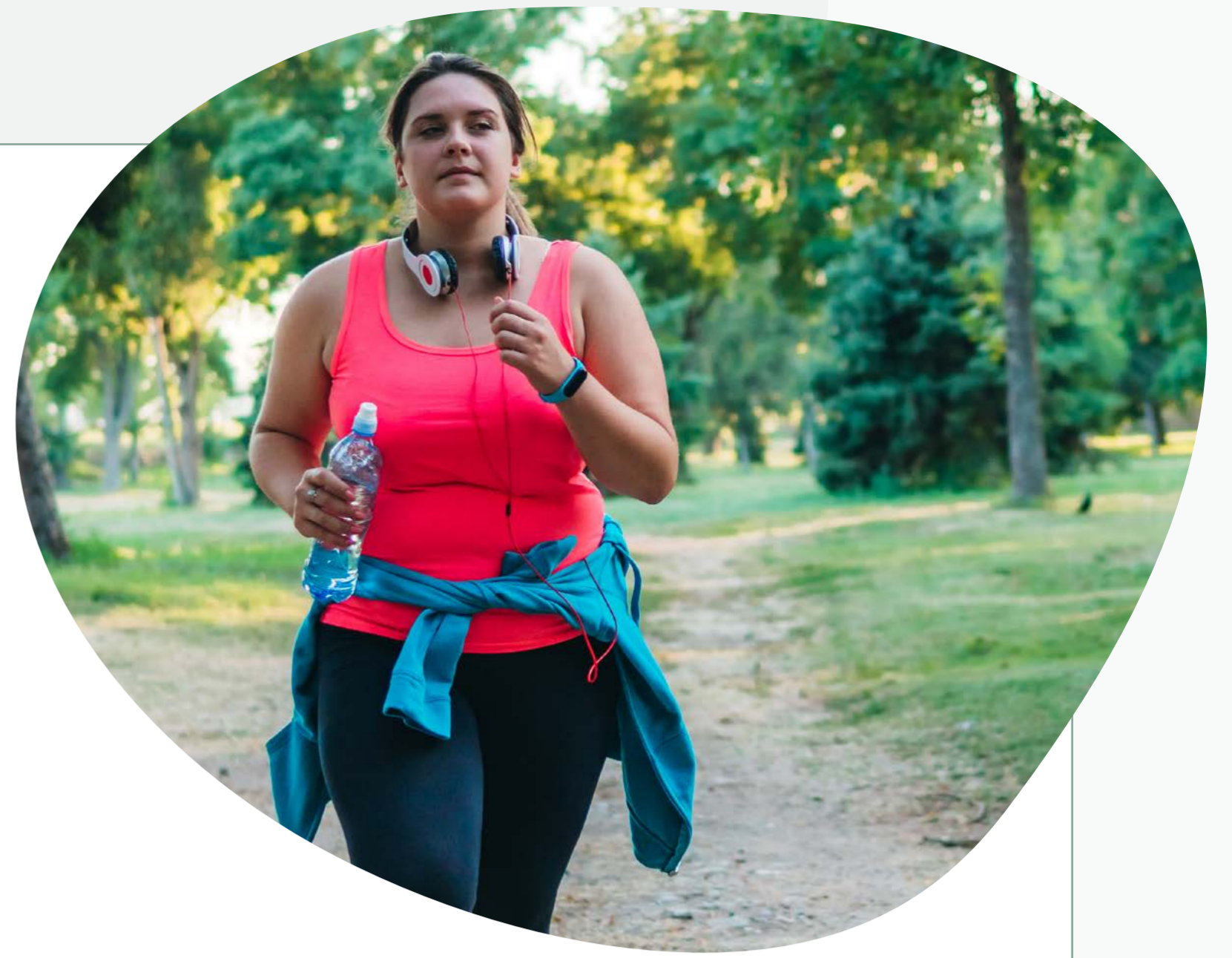
If you don't want to lose it, you gotta move it! Exercise is a fantastic way to keep yourself feeling and looking well. Not only does it pay dividends in long term energy, but the endorphins give you a boost in mood and set you up for a restful night's sleep.

Exercise also sets us up for success in our latter years by supporting healthy cognitive function. Not to mention the social aspect – making friendly connections through team sports or at the gym is another big plus.



## FEEL-GOOD TIPS

1. 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise that gets the heart pumping. Aim for five days per week. Start at a level that feels right for you. Little and often is better than one ripper cardio session a fortnight.
2. Strengthening exercises provide different benefits to cardio. We recommend a couple of strength sessions per week – depending on your goals you might want to add more.
3. Think about flexibility and balance – having supple, stable muscles will lend to better range of motion and overall fitness levels. See if you can incorporate some stretching and balancing exercises into your day. Yoga is fantastic for this.
4. If you need that extra support to get started, work with a health practitioner to increase exercise appropriately depending on your situation. It'll be way easier to stick with a routine that's right for you from the outset, so making the effort to identify this early on will yield the best long-term results.
5. Every opportunity for movement as valuable. Social walks, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, doing the odd set of jumping jacks – it all adds up.



# Heart

# health

As we grow older, taking care of our hearts becomes more and more important. Some of the best steps you can take to support a healthy heart include adopting a Mediterranean diet: high in omega-3 rich oily fish, monounsaturated olive oil, fibre rich vegetables and pulses, and low amounts of sodium and processed foods. This is considered a gold standard diet for supporting a healthy heart for all ages. And as with all health supporting habits, the sooner you can start, the better.

## **B VITAMINS**

B vitamins, especially B6, B12, and folic acid are responsible for many important metabolic processes in the body – shining especially bright when it comes to supporting healthy heart function. They're also key in supporting bone and skin health due to its role in maintaining strength of collagen fibres.

Vitamins B6, B12, and folic acid are commonly found in leafy green vegetables, legumes like chickpeas and kidney beans, and lean meats. With B vitamins being in such a variety of foods, we do not often see overt deficiencies of them, however we also do not tend to see people with optimal amounts either. It's important these nutrients are consumed regularly in the diet as they are not stored long term and are depleted by stress.

## CHOLESTEROL, BLOOD PRESSURE & COQ10

If you're taking statins for high cholesterol, it's especially important to consider CoQ10. CoQ10 plays a key role in the energy production cycle that takes place in all the cells of our body.

We can get CoQ10 from food sources like beef, but if statins are being taken or healthy cholesterol balance and blood pressure is a health goal, CoQ10 in supplement form could provide extra support.

As an antioxidant, CoQ10 supports healthy blood pressure by supporting the health of artery walls.



Joint

health

We don't need to put up with the creaks and discomfort that are common with getting older. While movement can help keep us loose and limber, sometimes joint discomfort can create a barrier to accessing that movement. If your joints could use a little TLC to help get your A into G, here are some supplements to consider:

## 1. TURMERIC

Turmeric has well and truly earned itself an impressive reputation in recent years, and for good reason. One of turmeric's unique qualities is its ability to offer broad support for our overall and everyday health.

Turmeric contains the powerful antioxidant curcumin, which is the most researched and known active ingredient within turmeric.

Its ability to support the body after a workout, soothing tired muscles and stiff joints, makes it the perfect supplement for anyone who wants to maintain an active lifestyle.

## 2. BOSWELLIA

Otherwise known as Frankincense, *Boswellia serrata* is an excellent plant for supporting joint comfort and movement. *Boswellia* contains boswellic acids, which supports the maintenance of healthy tissues.

*Boswellia* may also be helpful in supporting the immune system for a balanced response to the typical joint wear and tear of everyday life.





### 3. COLLAGEN

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body. It provides structure to our tissues, and is especially important in our skin, hair, joints, bones and gut. It makes up around 75% of our skin's structure, giving our skin bounce and plumpness. Within the joints, collagen supports comfort and lubrication, supporting easy movement.



It's natural, over the course of our lives, that collagen starts to deplete. Our collagen production tends to decline in 1% increments from our late twenties onwards, and this can be accelerated by things like diet, sun exposure and other lifestyle factors.

While we shouldn't waste our precious time or energy fighting the clock – and really celebrate the changes in appearance that come with age – there are many things we can do to look after and protect our joints and skin for as long as possible.

Steering clear of smoking, limiting alcohol, good sun protection, eating a nutrient-rich and wholefood diet, and supplementing with a high-quality collagen formula will keep your collagen stores as robust as possible.

# Menopause

Menopause is a natural and important phase in a woman's life that typically occurs in her late 40s or early 50s. It marks the end of reproductive years, but not the end of a vibrant and fulfilling life.

During menopause, a woman's body goes through hormonal changes, which can lead to various physical and emotional discomforts like hot flashes, mood swings, and changes in sleep patterns.

Menopause is a unique experience for every woman. While some may sail through it with minimal discomfort, others might find it challenging.

Fortunately, there are various ways to support your overall wellbeing during this transition. Maintaining a balanced diet, staying active, managing stress and herbal supplements can make a significant difference.



## BONE HEALTH

Taking care of our bones helps ensure we're physically robust in the years to come. There's no better time to think about supporting bone density, as bones are one of the slowest parts of our body for cell renewal.

Keeping our bones healthy takes Vitamin K (rich in leafy green vegetables), weight bearing exercise and good blood sugar balance.

Other helpful supplements that can help support bone health include vitamin D and calcium, which we'll explore next.

## VITAMIN D

Vitamin D receives a lot of attention for the way it can support the immune system. It's also one of the most essential nutrients for healthy bones.

Found naturally in the edible bones of small fish and made when the sun hits our bare skin, vitamin D supports the way that calcium is utilised and absorbed in the body. And vitamin D isn't just great for bones – it also supports good muscle strength, making it a reliable choice if you're prioritising bone health.

In New Zealand, it's common to be low in vitamin D. Things like drinking coffee and avoiding the sun to protect our skin are the usual suspects when it comes to hindering vitamin D synthesis and absorption. Especially when food sources may not be a regular feature on the menu (sardines on toast, anyone?).

## CALCIUM

Calcium rich foods include dark leafy vegetables, celery, sesame seeds (tahini is a great option), dairy foods, and those same sardines we talked about with vitamin D.

For women, calcium metabolism is linked with oestrogen production. As oestrogen declines, our ability to build bone back up from normal wear and tear isn't as efficient. Making sure our diet is rich in nutrients that support bone health is important to keep us feeling physically strong and capable.

## WEIGHT BEARING EXERCISE

When we exercise in a way that puts the weight of our body onto our bones, it triggers our bone cells to build new bone tissue.

Some examples of weight bearing exercises include walking, hiking, using stairs, dancing, and weightlifting. Including any of these exercises in your daily routine will help keep your bones strong.



# Mental clarity

We live in an age where we have the world and all its information at our fingertips. To keep up, we need to support healthy brain function. A healthy brain is when our mental clarity and focus are all working optimally in a way that allows us to feel functional and fulfilled.

There are some lovely ingredients out there that can provide brain support, such as L-theanine, known for supporting a calm mind and clear thinking. L-theanine occurs naturally in green tea and matcha, and research has shown how useful it can be to quickly calm worries, tension, and support healthy mental function.

From finishing your Wordle, to feeling calm and confident at your next social gathering – L-theanine offers excellent support.



# Mood & *focus*

Supporting happy mood and healthy focus is another key opportunity to enjoy our time aboard the age train (choo choo!). As well as getting good sleep, eating nutritious food, and making time for daily movement, there are great supplements we can consider if we're wanting to support buoyant brain health.

## **CHOLINE & INOSITOL**

Choline is made in tiny amounts by the body, and is found naturally in many foods, including egg yolk. Choline is used to build strong cell walls. It also plays a key role in nerve health by creating a neurotransmitter called acetylcholine, which is involved in sending messages in the body and brain function. Choline is a key nutrient for healthy mood and focus.

Like choline, inositol is important in supporting strong cell walls. It also interacts with insulin in a way that supports healthy blood glucose levels, meaning our energy levels remain stable throughout the day.

This stability can lend to happy moods and mental focus. Inositol also has a relationship with our calm and content neurotransmitter serotonin, paving an even wider route towards a relaxed disposition and happy mood.

# Sexual

# wellness

Sex can be really good for you – it can improve mood, blood flow and feel-good hormones. Most of us find intimacy, love, and companionship an important part of life.

Interest in sex does not necessarily stop at a particular age, but it can change over time. In women, hormonal changes might mean that vaginal lubrication requires support. For men, erections can be less easy to achieve and sustain. Anyone can find it more difficult to become aroused. Sometimes certain medications can also affect sexual function, like libido, erection and lubrication levels.

Sexual activity can improve mood, blood flow, and endorphin production, and can be a fantastic way to be physically active. Sometimes it is not as simple as just doing it.



## CHANGES TO VAGINAL TISSUE

During and after menopause, there are changes to the vaginal tissue, including:

- Loss of muscle tone
- Skin becomes thinner and more delicate
- Less lubricated
- More sensitive

Honest communication with your partner around what's enjoyable for you is important as these changes happen. The brain and your emotional state can be an important gateway to feeling pleasure. Encouraging confidence, removing pressure and expectation, and seeing it as an opportunity to connect with your partner can be ways to make sex more relaxing.

If female libido needs a boost, support can come in the form of Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), which is famous in Ayurvedic culture for meaning “she who possesses a hundred husbands.” While that’s probably not a goal that many would have, it’s a plant that can be taken right through a women’s life and can support a balanced reproductive system, no matter the life stage.





## CHANGES TO ERECTIONS

With age comes changes in hormones for all genders. In men, it's common for changes in testosterone and sexual performance. This can look like difficulty maintaining or sustaining an erection and decreased libido. Regular exercise is a great tool to help with healthy energy and stamina – supporting physical fitness and healthy circulation.

Maca, a Peruvian plant, has shown potential in studies to support a healthy sex drive and good energy levels. Maca can be taken by men and women, and supports stamina, wellbeing, and a happy mood in adults.



# Skin health

You're only as old as you feel – but sometimes the mirror tells us a different story! Luckily there's many habits we can adopt to support youthful, bouncy skin – helping us feel beautiful from the inside-out.

## AGE SPOTS

While we all want fun in the sun, as with anything, we need to make sure we're getting the right amount.

Sun and UV exposure throughout life causes damage to the skin at a cellular level, impacting our collagen and the other fibres that make it plump. This contributes to the formation of age spots, fine lines and wrinkles.



The best way to protect your skin from over exposure to sunlight is to wear sunscreen, hats and sunglasses.

## COLLAGEN FOR SKIN

When it comes to maintaining youthful, healthy skin, a top-down AND bottom-up approach is key. We want to have a regular skincare regime that supports our skin goals – using things like serums, good quality moisturisers and the all-important SPF – but for added insurance that our skin is getting the love it needs, taking a collagen supplement could provide extra skin aging support.

A diet that is high in antioxidants is another great way to support all-round healthy aging that also shows up as glowing skin. This includes fruit and vegetables, green powders like spirulina, drinking green tea or matcha, and including a high-quality omega-3 supplement in your daily routine.

If you're already taking a collagen supplement for a different health goal – there's no need to take extra collagen. Strive for glowing, plump skin? Learn about collagen and holistic tips to make it go further in our podcast: *Choose Well with HealthPost* – packed with healthy conversations to help you choose well.

## ASTAXANTHIN FOR SKIN

Another up-and-comer for healthy skin is astaxanthin – a carotenoid that provides strong antioxidant support and may even help protect your skin against the harsh sun, alongside (not instead of!) SPF.

# Sleep

Sleep is one of the key pillars for creating our base line of health. Our energy levels, mental and physical wellbeing, and anything else you could think of all rely on the restorative processes that can only happen while we're sleeping.

Sleep can be elusive for all sorts of reasons. Hormonal changes, out of balance stress, breathing patterns, poor digestion... the list goes on! If you notice that getting to sleep is a struggle, it's important to seek support. Getting the right amount of sleep is one of the most important things we can do to set up our bodies for aging vibrantly.



# Sleep hygiene

A great place to start improving sleep patterns is to implement sleep hygiene. Here are some proven tips to help get you started:

1. Reduce blue light exposure in the evening. This includes the light that comes off phones and laptops. Blue light is stimulating and triggers our wakeful hormones to keep us alert. Putting a blue light filter on your devices or limiting exposure to screens in the evening can support a good sleep.
2. Increase sunlight exposure early in the day. This will help set your circadian rhythm, supporting your energy during the day and – especially with limited blue light exposure in the evening – set you up for a restful sleep at night.
3. Be mindful of caffeine. A good rule of thumb is to have your last cup of coffee (or caffeine equivalent) at least 6 hours before you want to get to sleep that night.
4. If after 20 minutes of lying in bed you have not fallen asleep, get up and do a relaxing activity. This could be something like reading, listening to an audiobook, maybe even gentle yoga or meditation. This helps reframe our relationship with our beds and prevents us getting frustrated with the whole falling asleep process.

## BUSY BRAIN

When a busy brain is impacting your sleep onset or quality, minerals like calcium and magnesium are a great option to support calmly dropping off to sleep.

Herbs like passionflower, kava, skullcap, and lemon balm are all soothing and nourishing for a busy brain. They can help calm the mind and ease worries making a solid sleep cycle easier to attain.

## MIDNIGHT BATHROOM TRIPS

If your bladder is waking you up more than twice a night, it may be stopping your body from reaching the deep, restorative levels of sleep. Reducing large drinks in the evening and reducing alcohol, which is a diuretic is a great place to start.



## PROSTATE HEALTH

Noticing increased frequency or reduced flow of your daytime “number 1s”? As men age, supporting a healthy prostate is important for the normal flow of urine to the bladder. The health of your prostate should be kept an eye on by your doctor after age 40.

Thankfully, there’s lots of herbs and nutrients that support prostate health. Studies have shown Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) supports prostate tissue health and healthy urine flow. Saw palmetto, lycopene, and nettle are very popular supporting the health of the tissue around the prostate, which in turn supports healthy urine flow.