

Immunity Aligned



NOURISHMENT

Simple recipes to boost your immune and stay ahead

LIFESTYLE

Daily tips to keep your body and mind immune strong

YOGA

Immune sequence to support you moving well



Aligned

Tiffany Bergin M.Ed.
Internationally Certified Iyengar Yoga Instructor
Certified Yoga Therapist
Functional Nutrition Educator

Following one of my recent yoga classes, I was asked to share some tips on empowering others when it comes to the topic of immune health. I offer this 3 part toolkit in hopes that you will find a few new notes to add into your daily practices. I offer this guide as a Certified Yoga Therapist and Functional Lifestyle / Nutrition Educator.

If you would like more information or have any questions about the content provided here please

contact me at

tiffany@justbealigned.com

The Content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or licensed health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

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Reduce



Ease up on the sweets

Just a few grams of sugar can destroy your white blood cells' ability to resist infections for several hours. Also consider that sugar is a top inflammatory food, alongside dairy and gluten. Inflammation is a key factor in immune response. Our goal here is to boost the immune, not challenge it.

Read your labels

Look at the ingredients on every package you buy (as opposed to just the grams of sugar). Notice where the sugar is sneaking in (tapioca, brown rice syrup, fructose, dextrose) and start to find better options.

Look for alternatives

Coconut sugar is a low glycemic option that can replace white refined sugar 1-1 in recipes.

Dates are packed with fiber, antioxidants as well as iron and potassium. You can soak, blend and use as a natural homemade sweetener in desserts.

Honey in its raw, local and non-pasteurized form is best or reach for Manuka in the grocery aisle. Honey is comprised of minerals, vitamins and enzymes and is much sweeter than sugar so a little goes a long way!

Stevia is available in several forms, including powdered leaves and liquid concentrates. Just like honey, stevia is MUCH sweeter than sugar so start with a dash when cooking.



Introduce



Eat Immune Smart

All health begins in the GUT!

Including both vitamin-rich and gut protective foods can go a long way towards sustained health and overall wellbeing.

Eat your C's

Aceroal Cherries

Rose hips

Guava

Sweet peppers

Blackcurrants

Parsley

Mustard greens

Kale

Kiwi

Strawberries

Note: If you take a zinc supplement at the same time as your C's, it is said to have synergistic immune benefits.

Adding Balance

Bring in the Fermentables...

Incorporating a dish of sauerkraut or kimchi will get the enzymes activated and the microbiome primed for your meals.

Sip on a **miso** or **bone broth** based soup. Also using that bone broth when you cook grains or saute vegetables, is a great way to get more amino acids, vitamins and minerals into your regular foods.

Add **coconut** yogurt or coconut kefir to your breakfast menu. Also consider a few scoops of grass fed **collagen** in a smoothie to boost your gut health!

Medicinal Mushrooms like chaga, reishi, shiitake and turkey tail are high in antioxidants, providing immune enhancement to both the innate as well as adaptive immune responses. They come in powdered, liquid and capsule form.



Season



Immune Champions

Many herbs and spices champion our immunity and can be included throughout the day in meals, tinctures, powders and warming teas.

Garlic is rich in antioxidants and selenium, as well as possessing both antibacterial and antiviral properties.

Ginger holds anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, which helps fight, treat and protect against infection. Ginger is also known as a natural purifier of the lymphatic system, a network of organs and tissues in the body that help rid us of harmful toxins and waste.

Elderberries are touted for treatment of acute infections and fever. They are champions of the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and musculoskeletal systems.

Echinacea is insecticidal, anti-fungal and anti-bacterial. It is also active against viruses by inhibiting an enzyme used by viruses to break down cell walls.

Astragalus is reported to strengthen both nonspecific and specific immunity, combating general infections of all kinds as a champion anti-viral agent. It regulates white blood cell division and activity and its immune effects are slow and sustained, with full benefits reached after weeks of daily ingestion.

Additional Antimicrobial Herbs

Berberry
Wormwood
Calendula
Cayenne
Myrrh
Goldenseal



Fire Cider Vinegar

INGREDIENTS

1 medium white onion
4-5 cloves of garlic, coarsely chopped
4 TBSP freshly grated ginger root
3-4 TBSP freshly grated horseradish root
Braggs apple cider vinegar
Honey
Cayenne powder

DIRECTIONS

Combine the onion, garlic, ginger and horseradish in a wide mouthed glass quart jar and fill the jar with enough warmed apple cider vinegar to cover the herbs.

Place the jar in a warm spot in your house, ideally near a sunny window and let sit for 3-4 weeks.

Strain; then discard the spent herbs.

Add the honey and cayenne pepper to taste, more or less to control the heat and sweet.



Recipes adapted from the Functional Nutrition Alliance



Elderberry Syrup

INGREDIENTS

4 cups cold filtered water
2 cups organic dried elderberries
1 organic cinnamon stick
1 tsp freshly grated or dried organic ginger root
Raw local honey

DIRECTIONS

Combine the berries and herbs with cold water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and allow herbs to simmer for 30-40 minutes. Remove from heat and mash the berries in the liquid mixture. Strain the berries and herbs through cheesecloth, squeezing out and reserving the juice. Measure the liquid and add an equal amount of honey. Gently heat the honey and juice for a few minutes until well combined. Store in sterile, glass jars in the refrigerator and use within 3 months.



Root Broth

INGREDIENTS

3 cups bone or veggie broth
1 ounce astragalus root slices
5-10 cloves fresh garlic
salt and pepper
a handful of medicinal mushrooms (turkey tail, reishi, shiitake, chaga, etc...)
nettle leaf

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients and simmer 4-6 hours. Strain the broth and season with salt and pepper to taste.
You can make this broth ahead of time and freeze in ice trays to drink or use when cooking rice, stews or vegetables several times per week for an enhanced immune boost.



Recipes adapted from the Functional Nutrition Alliance



Cider Tea

INGREDIENTS

1 Cup boiling water
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 Tbsp Raw local honey
1 Tsp Braggs apple cider vinegar
Grated ginger root

DIRECTIONS

Combine all the ingredients into a small pot of boiling water and allow to simmer for 2-5 minutes, stirring honey in the mix.
Pour, sip and enjoy.



Infuse



Cleanse Your Senses

Essential oils and aromatics are a wonderful way to bring organic, pure ingredients into your personal care products and home environment. The use of oils in healing practices is centuries old and can be used safely by most in their pure form.

Palo Santo wood has been used in clearing rituals and to rid the air of unwanted elements. Its oils have been found to lower oxidative stress and protect cells. It possesses phytochemicals which may help ward off disease formation. Simply burn a few chunks or light the end of a stick of this earthy wood and enjoy the clearing.

Eucalyptus is known for clearing congestion. You can add a few drops to a diffuser or a boiling pot of water on the stove. Add to a carrier lotion or oil to rub on your chest or add a few drops to your shower or bath and breathe in.

Tea Tree holds antimicrobial, anti-fungal and anti-viral properties. Try adding a few drops to liquid soaps.

Bergamot is a grounding oil that has shown efficacy against flu viruses when inhaled via a diffuser or leaning over a pot of infused steaming water.

Peppermint oil added to a cool cloth can be applied to the temples to help reduce fever.

Myrrh & Frankincense both contain antimicrobial properties and pair well when inhaled together.

Mix It Up

Thieves is a long standing **blend** and many companies carry an immune supportive mix, including oils such as wild orange peel, cloves, cinnamon, rosemary and our trusty eucalyptus.

Adding a bit of immune oil tonic mixed with a carrier oil or lotion and rubbed into the soles of your feet can be a nourishing way to end the day.



Rinse



Water is Life

Rinsing the mucous linings with salt water is a wonderful way to rid your system of toxins and clear passages. Hydration is key to keeping your body at its highest immune fighting potential.

Neti Pots are used as a traditional practice of clearing the nasal passages. Mixing 1 cup **distilled** water with a 1/4-1/2 tsp of non-ionized **salt** to make your solution. I prefer to use warmed water as it is more soothing.

Process: Tilt your head sideways over the sink and place the spout of the neti pot in the upper nostril. Breathing through your open mouth, gently pour the saltwater solution into your upper nostril so that the liquid drains through the lower nostril. Repeat on the other side. Be sure to **rinse** the pot after each use with similarly distilled, sterile, or filtered water and leave open to air-dry.

Gargling with a similar solution is also beneficial for health of your respiratory tract, mainly the throat. Gargling will break up excess mucous and offers an anti-inflammatory rinse to ease the throat and rinse away bacteria.

Process: Add 1 tsp of sea salt to 8 oz water and gargle, aiming to gargle for at least 30 seconds.

Bonus Tip: If you are able to gargle until you tear up you will also be activating your vagus nerve, (which I will add more about in the next section) which will also support your overall immune and wellbeing.

Sip on this...

We should aim to drink 1/2 of our body weight in oz of liquid daily. Water is by far the best option. You may also add organic lemon juice or mix in herbal teas like throat coat with echinacea, turmeric and ginger tea, lemon balm and other herbals or slice some oranges and infuse your sip with a little zest.





Center

Find Your Breath

Deep breathing and pranayama can slow the heart rate and reduce cortisol levels in the body.

Find a comfortable supported seat or lie down with support under your spine, head and neck.

Your eyes can be soft, covered with a cloth or closed. Focus on the sensation of your inhalations and exhalations through your nostrils. Note where the breath touches. As you breathe in, bring your breath into areas of the mind and body that are holding tension. As you exhale, release those areas and clear the horizon in your mind's eye. Relax your body more deeply with every exhalation. Over time you may begin to lengthen the exhalations so that they become passive, like a sigh. Allow your consciousness to rest in your breath and as thoughts come into view do not attach to them. Instead, envision them as pebbles tossed into a pond and with every exhalation the horizon of that pond smooths before you. Come out of this place of quiet slowly as you re-enter your day.

-Namaste

Lighten Your Mental Load

Prolonged states of stress and elevated cortisol levels lead to a higher risk of viruses. Laugh when you can, focus on the present moment, be gentle with yourself and others. Use positive self talk and intention-setting to make a conscious decision to trust in your innate ability to live a full and deep life and in the universal energy that is there to support you.

Sleep

Better sleep leads to a better ability to cope with daily mental and physical stress. The different phases of sleep are necessary for you to move between in order to refurbish your immune system.

Tips:

Turn off wifi in your home

Go to bed and wake on a regular schedule

Include calming evening activities such as;
read a book, a real book

journaling

deep breathing

warm epsom salt bath with lavender





Move

Connect with Your Body

The sequence below has been designed to activate the thymus gland and soften the brain as well as the organs of action and perception. It includes specific asanas to support the immune system. It has been designed for those who do not yet regularly practice sustained inversions. This sequence has also been designed so that one without many props readily available will still experience the benefits of this immune practice.

Practice: You will need two blocks and one blanket. Books of equal proportions could also be used in place of blocks and a towel could be used in place of a yoga blanket. Connect with your breath throughout this sequence, opening your chest and lifting your heart space. Come out of this practice slowly as you re-enter your day.



Movement as Therapy

The sequence that follows is based upon an immune sequence provided by BKS Iyengar. I would like to thank one of my teachers, Suzanne Takemura, Junior Intermediate III for reviewing and giving approval of this practice.

Tips:

It is generally recommended that you should not eat prior to asana practice. Ensure in all of the supine positions that the flesh is released from the waist area towards the feet to take care of your spine. Ensure you are straight from left to right in all asanas. Please do not turn your head in the supine positions as your neck will be lengthened. To come out of the supine asanas, either use your arms to come up with a lifted chest, or roll to your right side and rest there for a few breaths, look down as you press yourself up to sitting.



Immunity Sequence



Uttanasana w/ head support | 1-2 min | Take feet wide enough apart that you are able to bend forward with straight legs. Lift kneecaps and front thigh as you fold forward to place **forehead** on the block(s). Extend side waist and lift shoulders away from your ears. Soften skin of forehead towards brows, breathe in and out through the nostrils, with soft diaphragm and abdomen.



Adho mukha svanasana w/ head support | 1-2 min | Take hands and feet as wide as your mat, start on hands and knees and lift hips and heels, move weight into your legs and extend your spine towards the ceiling. Release heels towards the floor and allow your **forehead** to come down towards the block(s) without bending your arms or legs. Soften skin of forehead towards brows, breathe in and out through the nostrils, with soft diaphragm and abdomen.



Uttanasana w/ head support | 1-2 min | Take feet closer as you bend forward with straight legs. Lift kneecaps and front thigh as you fold forward to place **crown of head** on the block(s). Extend side waist and lift shoulders away from your ears. Soften skin of forehead towards brows, breathe in and out through the nostrils, with soft diaphragm and abdomen.



Adho mukha svanasana w/ head support | 1-2 min | Take feet hip width apart, and hands shoulder width. Start on hands and knees and lift hips and heels, move weight into your legs and extend your spine towards the ceiling. Release heels towards the floor and allow the **crown of your head** to come down towards the block(s) without bending your arms or legs. Soften skin of forehead towards brows, breathe in and out through the nostrils, with soft diaphragm and abdomen.



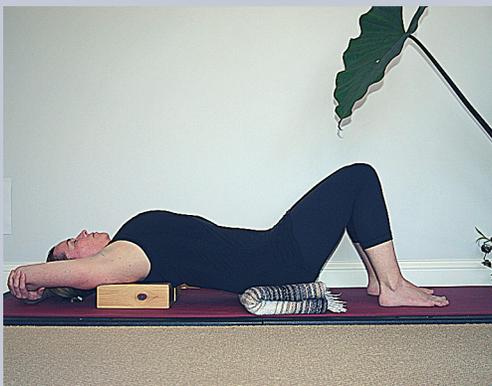
Immunity Sequence



Prasarita padottanasana w/ head support | 1-2 min | Take feet 4 1/2 to 5 ft apart with outer edges of feet parallel to your mat. Extend your spine forward, leading with your heart. Keep legs very active drawing up from the floor as you extend the side waist down and release the **crown of your head** onto the block(s) without bending your legs. Place hands on the floor behind your shoulders so that top arm is parallel to the floor and lift shoulders away from your ears. Breathe in and out through the nostrils, with soft diaphragm and abdomen.



Savasana w/ spine supported | 5 min | Place 2 blocks on lowest height parallel to the long edge of your mat, place one blanket folded lengthwise on top of blocks and fold excess to support head and neck. Sit an inch or so away from the support with bent legs, lift your chest and lie back on support, use hands to release from waist to back of legs and then extend legs out and rest with palms up. Breathe in and out through the nostrils, releasing from crown of head to the soles of your feet with heart-space open.



Supta baddha hastasana w/ shoulder support | 2-4 min | Place 2 blocks on lowest height side by side parallel to the long edge of your mat to support shoulder blades. Place one blanket folded lengthwise under your hips. Lower yourself to the shoulder support, use hands to release from waist to back of legs and take hold of your elbows and extend overhead. Spread soles of your feet into the floor. Breathe in and out through the nostrils, releasing shoulders and opening chest. Then change grip of elbows and repeat.



Savasana II w/ spine support | 2-4 min | Place 2 blocks parallel to the long edge of your mat with head support on highest and spine support on medium height. Sit a foot or so from the blocks and lift your chest as you lower yourself to the support, the lowest block should be between your shoulder blades in line with the spine. You may need a blanket under your head to ensure back neck is long. Use hands to release from waist to back of legs and extend legs. Breathe in and out through the nostrils, releasing shoulders and opening chest. Soften rib cage and abdomen, allow legs to release into the floor.



Immunity Sequence



Setubandha sarvangasana w/ spine supported | 5 min | Place 2 blocks on lowest height parallel to the long edge of your mat, place one blanket folded lengthwise on top of blocks. Sit on edge of the support with bent legs, lift your chest and lie back on support, hold support and press legs to slide towards head until top shoulder comes to the floor. If back is comfortable, extend legs out and rest with palms up. Breathe in and out through the nostrils, releasing from crown of head to the soles of your feet with heart-space open.



Viparita karani | 5 min | Lay with legs up the wall as close to the wall and hamstrings will allow with straight legs. Bend knees, lift hips and walk on top shoulder towards the wall then place 2 blocks on medium height perpendicular to the wall. Lift chest and release low back to the blocks. Keep chest lifted and be supported by top shoulders, hips on blocks and thighs pressing towards the wall. Release your neck, jaw and facial features. Soften abdomen, breathe in and out through the nostrils. Releasing from crown of head to the heart -space.



Supta baddha konasana w/ spine supported | 5 min | Place 2 blocks on lowest height parallel to the long edge of your mat, place one blanket folded lengthwise on top of blocks and fold excess to support head and neck. Sit an inch or so away from the support with bent legs soles of the feet together. Lift your chest and lie back on support, use hands to release from waist to back of legs to ensure the flesh of buttocks does not grip towards the waist. Tuck shoulder blades towards the spine and rest with palms up. Breathe in and out through the nostrils, soften your abdomen.



Savasana | 10 min | Sit on the middle of your mat with bent legs, lie on your back, you may need a blanket under your head to ensure back neck is long or a rolled blanket under thighs to alleviate low back strain. Use hands to release from waist to back of legs and extend legs. Be on the flat part of the shoulder blades. Breathe in and out through the nostrils, releasing from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet with heart-space open. Allow your senses to move inward and let go with every exhalation, allowing your consciousness to rest in your breath.





Connect

Ground

Visualization and grounding practices can keep us in our bodies and in the moment as well as give us a place of safety to return to inside when outside stimulus is overwhelming.

Practice:

Sit in a firm chair where you have support for your spine and are able to spread the soles of your feet into the floor. Release the muscles of your back and shoulders (I do this in my car or when I can be barefoot outside). Connect to your breath, feeling the sensation in your nostrils, as you breathe in and out normally. Relax your facial features, and begin to move the energy from your brain down towards your seat and then further into your legs and then into your feet. Allow this energy to continue through the floor into the earth as you visualize yourself rooted deep into the earth. Feel the grounding and the stability of the earth beneath you and connect to that energy.

Community

Don't neglect **social** connections. They add to our longevity and immune function. Technology can inhibit or create connection depending on how you choose to engage with it. At times, when we are isolated from others, it is a great way to reach out, phone a friend, find an online community to join. However, we also get easily distracted by the access to the outer world and at times neglect the **attention** both ourselves and loved one around us need. Don't forget the impact of touch, eye **contact** and active listening in your daily interactions.

Tips:

Connect with others in some way, every day
Connect with a **pet**
Ask for **help** when you need it

Please feel free to connect with me for additional support tiffany@justbealigned.com

