Aliment

THE SYMPTOM-TO-SOLUTION BLUEPRINT

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

THIS GUIDE IS NOT MEANT TO BE READ STRAIGHT THROUGH FROM BEGINNING TO END LIKE A BOOK.

It is designed to work the way your body works: in systems and patterns.

IMPLEMENT THE CORE SECTION

These habits create stability across all systems of the guide. Many people see meaningful symptom improvement from the Core section alone. Start here before jumping into any other chapters.

READ ONLY THE SECTIONS THAT APPLY TO YOU

Each chapter is designed to stand on its own.
Inside each chapter you'll find: Symptom patterns, What's happening beneath the surface, Practical strategies, Labs for deeper clarity. You do not need to read every chapter to benefit.

USE THE QUICK REFERENCE TO FIND YOUR PATTERN

Scan the symptom list and circle the ones that match your current experience. Then go directly to those sections. This helps you avoid information overload and focus on what actually applies to your body.

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INTRO

I created this guide for the person who has spent far too long feeling like something is wrong in their body while being given explanations that never truly match their experience. You have probably heard things like "your labs look normal," "maybe try exercising more," or "it is probably menopause". None of it feels aligned with what you are actually living through. You know your body better than anyone else, and you feel when something is off. You feel the fatigue that makes no sense, the bloating that shows up out of nowhere, the cravings, the mood shifts, the changes in weight, the disrupted sleep, and the confusion that follows when no one can explain it.

This guide exists to remind you that you are not imagining any of this. Your body has been signaling you for a long time, and you deserve a way to understand what those signals mean. Your symptoms are not random or dramatic. They are clues. Sometimes they whisper, sometimes they are loud, but they are always meaningful. Your body communicates through energy, digestion, mood, hormones, sleep, appetite, and resilience, and when something shifts internally, those patterns change long before a conventional lab ever reflects it.

As you move through these pages, you will begin to recognize the pattern behind what you have been feeling. You will learn why your symptoms show up the way they do, what is happening underneath the surface, what you can begin supporting today, which labs provide clarity, and when it is time for personalized care.

My goal is simple. I want to help you finally connect the dots, feel understood, and feel empowered to take action with information that makes sense for your body. You are not crazy. You are not broken. You were simply never given the map. This guide is where that begins..

CORE

Before we dive into your specific symptom pattern, it is important to understand that your body works as one connected system. When one area shifts, whether it is blood sugar, thyroid function, digestion, hormones, or your stress response, the rest of your body adjusts. This is why you may recognize yourself in more than one section of this guide. Symptoms rarely show up in only one place because your systems are constantly communicating with each other.

Just as symptoms overlap, the habits that support your body overlap too. There are core nutritional and lifestyle foundations, shared below, that create stability across every system. With these foundations in place, the body becomes more regulated, and many symptoms improve as balance is restored. If some symptoms remain, the system-specific sections that follow will help you understand where your body may need more individualized support.



THE HABITS BELOW FORM THE CORE FOUNDATIONS THAT SUPPORT YOUR BODY ACROSS ALL SYSTEMS.

EAT YOUR FIRST MEAL WITHIN 60-90 MINUTES OF WAKING

This anchors your cortisol curve, steadies early blood sugar, and prevents the mid-morning crash that creates cravings, anxiety, and fatigue. Your body reads early nourishment as a "safety signal."

BUILD MEALS AROUND PROTEIN, SLOW CARBOHYDRATES, AND FIBER

This combination keeps hunger predictable, glucose steady, and energy stable. It supports thyroid hormone conversion, hormone production, gut motility, and nervous system regulation.

FOLLOW A MEAL RHYTHM OF THREE MEALS SPACED FOUR TO FIVE HOURS APART

A predictable rhythm supports insulin sensitivity, thyroid balance, digestive motility, and cortisol regulation. If hunger appears earlier, choose a structured snack with protein rather than grazing.

AVOID CAFFEINE ON AN EMPTY STOMACH

Caffeine before food intensifies cortisol, increases glucose variability, and heightens stress physiology. Pairing coffee with food keeps energy and mood more stable throughout the day.

HYDRATE STEADILY THROUGH THE FIRST HALF OF THE DAY

Hydration impacts metabolism, digestion, headaches, cravings, blood pressure, and adrenal function. A consistent morning hydration rhythm is more effective than drinking most fluids at night.

SUPPORT DIGESTION THROUGH SIMPLE EATING HABITS

Eat slowly, chew thoroughly, choose warm or cooked foods if digestion is sluggish, and avoid lying down immediately after meals. These habits help with bloating, nutrient absorption, motility, and gut-brain signaling.

MOVE GENTLY AFTER MEALS

Light movement, such as walking, increases glucose uptake, reduces inflammation, improves motility, and regulates cravings. It works even better than many supplements for metabolic stability.

MAINTAIN A DAILY MOVEMENT BASELINE

Non-exercise movement (walking, stretching, household motion) sets the tone for metabolic health, lymphatic flow, and inflammation levels. This matters as much as workouts!

ANCHOR YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

Get natural morning light, keep bedtime consistent, dim evening light, and avoid heavy meals right before bed. Circadian stability influences cortisol, thyroid conversion, appetite, mood, and digestion.

PRACTICE SMALL DAILY STRESS-REGULATION MOMENTS

Brief, frequent nervous system resets – slow breathing, stepping outside, stretching, pausing before reacting – have more impact than long, inconsistent practices. They directly affect digestion, blood sugar, and hormone balance.

PROTECT YOUR SLEEP WINDOW

Aim for consistent timing, wind-down routines, and reduced stimulation before bed. Sleep is one of the most powerful regulators of metabolism, inflammation, cravings, and hormonal rhythm.

INCLUDE 30 OR MORE PLANT FOODS PER WEEK

Plant diversity supports the microbiome, detoxification, hormone metabolism, inflammation balance, and cravings. You do not need exotic foods – just variety.

PRIORITIZE MINERAL-RICH FOODS

Minerals like magnesium, zinc, selenium, iodine, and potassium support thyroid function, hormones, blood sugar regulation, and detoxification. These nutrient gaps are common and often drive symptoms.



"Your results will always reflect your patterns, not your intentions."

QUICK REFERENCE

This section helps you choose where to begin. The symptoms listed here reflect some of the most common ways imbalances show up, but they are not a complete list. Each section of this guide explores additional symptoms, patterns, and context. Use this map as a shortcut to the chapters that are most likely to be relevant for you.

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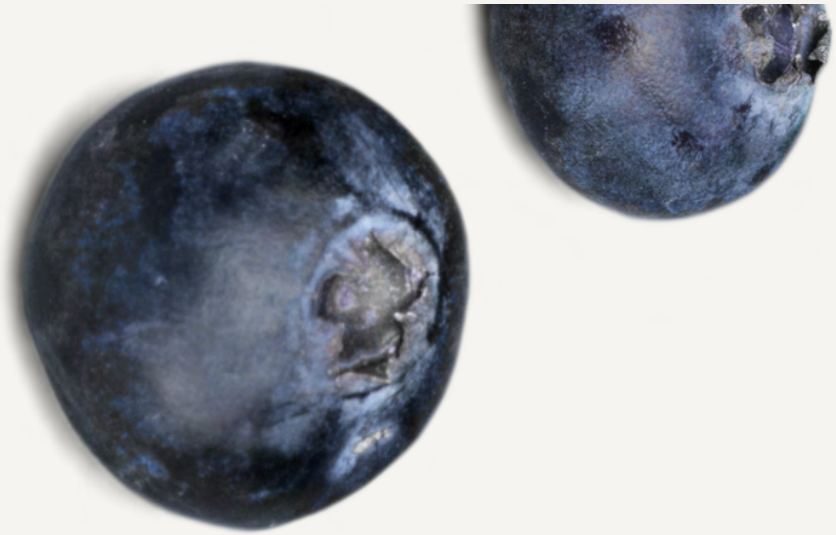
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BLOOD SUGAR DYSREGULATION

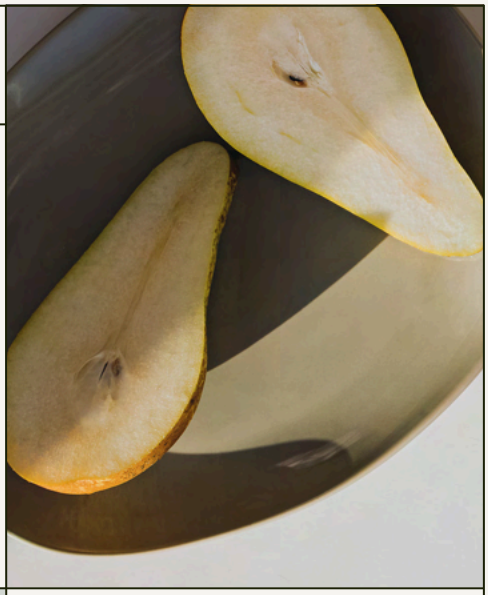
SYMPTOMS

PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Darkened skin patches around the neck, underarms, or groin
- Skin tags on the neck or chest
- Waist size increasing over time
- Increased thirst
- Increased urination

HUNGER SIGNALS

- Getting hungry again 1–2 hours after a meal
- Feeling shaky, lightheaded, or irritable between meals
- Feeling "normal" only once you eat
- Intense cravings for carbs or sweets
- Needing to snack constantly to maintain energy
- Feeling "desperate" to eat rather than gradually hungry



COGNITIVE CLUES

- Irritability when hungry ("hangry")
- Anxiety that improves almost immediately after eating
- Difficulty concentrating when meals are delayed
- Feeling spacey or foggy mid-morning or mid-afternoon
- Mood swings tied to meal timing



POST-MEAL RESPONSES

- Feeling sleepy or foggy 30–60 minutes after eating carbs
- Feeling wired, shaky, or sweaty after high-carb meals
- Heart racing/pounding heartbeat/fluttering heartbeat after sugar
- Headaches triggered by fasting or high-carb intake

METABOLIC SIGNS

- Difficulty losing weight despite effort
- Puffy or swollen feeling after carb-heavy meals

BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS

- Feeling better with protein-rich meals vs carb-heavy ones
- Needing sugar or caffeine to get through the afternoon
- Feeling weak, shaky, or nauseated with longer fasts
- Intense desire for food after dinner (even if not physically hungry)



TARGETED SUPPORT

IDENTIFY YOUR PERSONAL HIGH-SPIKE FOODS

People respond differently because of gut health differences, muscle mass, stress state, sleep quality, and genetics. Track which meals leave you sleepy, jittery, craving sugar, or hungry too soon. Common culprits include rice bowls, pastries, pasta, cereal, sweetened drinks, and fruit eaten alone. Your patterns matter more than generic lists.

INCREASE PROTEIN IN THE FIRST TWO MEALS

(Not just the first meal. This prevents the afternoon crash and reduces the "nighttime overeating" pattern that often begins with an under-fueled morning and midday.

SWAP FAST CARBS FOR SLOW CARBS

Slow-digesting carbs promote steady energy and stable blood sugar. Swap juice for whole fruit, white bread for sprouted or whole grain, cereal for oats with protein, and refined pasta for lentil or whole-grain options. These changes lower glycemic load without cutting food groups.

ADJUST CARBS ON HIGH-STRESS DAYS

Cortisol raises glucose even without food. On stressful days, keep meals protein-anchored, avoid carb-only snacks, prioritize walking over HIIT, and avoid skipping meals. This prevents cortisol-driven blood sugar swings and late-day crashes.

USE THE ORDER-OF-EATING METHOD

Protein first, fiber/veggies second, carbs last. This slows gastric emptying and moderates the insulin response and alone reduce blood sugar spikes after meals by a meaningful margin.

USE SIMPLE PRE-MEAL GLUCOSE MODULATORS

Vinegar water before meals, chia or flax added to food, or a small protein bite before meals can meaningfully blunt blood sugar rise. These work by slowing how fast food leaves your stomach and helping your body manage blood sugar better after eating, without needing supplements.

STRENGTHEN MINERAL INTAKE DAILY

Magnesium, potassium, chromium, and trace minerals are essential for insulin signaling, cravings regulation, thyroid conversion, and energy metabolism. Prioritize greens, beans, nuts, seeds, avocado, yogurt, potatoes, and seafood for food-based mineral repletion.

AVOID "NAKED" CARBS AND SNACKS

Carbohydrates digest rapidly on their own, which creates a sharp rise and fast drop in blood sugar. This is the pattern behind shakiness, irritability, headaches, and rebound hunger. Pairing carbs with protein, fat, or fiber turns them into slow fuel instead of quick sugar.







LABS TO CONSIDER

- Fasting insulin
- Fasting glucose
- HgA1c
- hs-CRP
- Triglycerides
- Thyroid panel
- DUTCH hormone panel



THYROID FUNCTION

SYMPTOMS

(HYPOTHYROIDISM, SUBCLINICAL HYPOTHYROIDISM, POOR T4→T3 CONVERSION)

METABOLISM

- Feeling like your metabolism is slow despite eating well and staying active
- Weight gain or inability to lose weight at a normal pace
- Lower than usual resting heart rate (not due to training)
- Fatigue that feels "heavy" or slow
- Needing more sleep but still waking feeling tired

TEMPERATURE REGULATION

- Feeling cold when others are comfortable
- Cold hands and feet
- Running colder than normal

SKIN, HAIR, AND NAIL CHANGES

- Dry, rough, flaky skin
- Hair thinning or increased shedding
- Eyebrow thinning, especially the outer third
- Brittle nails or slow nail growth
- Dry or cracked heels
- Puffy face or eyelids

COGNITIVE SIGNS

- Brain fog or slowed thinking
- More forgetful
- Slower word recall
- Trouble focusing, especially in mornings
- Feeling mentally "sluggish"
- Low motivation
- A sense of apathy
- Mild depressive mood
- Reduced drive even with normal life stress

MUSCULOSKELETAL SYMPTOMS

- Muscle stiffness, especially in the morning
- Achy, heavy-feeling muscles
- Joint stiffness without inflammatory swelling
- Sore longer after workouts
- Low exercise tolerance or feeling easily fatigued with activity





MENSTRUAL PATTERNS

- Heavier or longer periods
- More painful periods
- Irregular cycles
- Fertility difficulties

DIGESTIVE PATTERNS

- Constipation
- Bloating
- Feeling full quickly
- Food feels like it sits in your stomach
- Increased burping

TARGETED SUPPORT

MINERAL SUPPORT

Your thyroid depends on minerals like selenium, zinc, and iron to make, activate, and transport hormones. Food-first sources like Brazil nuts, seafood, poultry, red meat, lentils, spinach with vitamin C, eggs, sunflower seeds, and mushrooms help support hormone conversion and how well your thyroid responds.

REDUCE LONG FASTS

When thyroid output is low, long gaps without food can leave you cold, fatigued, or foggy. Shorter overnight fasts with predictable mealtimes help support your metabolism and help prevent stress hormones from interfering with active thyroid hormone.

CHOOSE PROTEINS THAT ARE EASIER TO DIGEST

Since low thyroid often means lower stomach acid, some proteins are easier to digest than others. Eggs, Greek yogurt, poultry, fish, and ground meats tend to be gentle, improve amino acid absorption, and support thyroid hormone production.

MIND THE STRESS-THYROID CONNECTION.

High cortisol slows T4→T3 conversion. When stress rises, shorter meal gaps, gentle movement instead of very intense workouts, and grounding before meals can help keep your thyroid more supported. Small reductions in daily stress have a noticeable impact on thyroid symptoms.

EMPHASIZE WARM, COOKED, EASY-TO-DIGEST MEALS

Low thyroid slows motility and stomach acid. Your digestion responds better to warm, cooked meals than to cold smoothies or raw salads in large amounts. This helps your body absorb nutrients better, reduces bloating, and supports energy.

MAINTAIN STEADY CARBOHYDRATE INTAKE

our thyroid works best with steady fuel. Very low-carb eating or inconsistent carb intake can reduce conversion to active thyroid hormone and increase fatigue. Choose steady portions of root vegetables, potatoes, fruit, and cooked grains to give your body steady energy.

SUPPORT STOMACH ACID NATURALLY

Low thyroid function is often linked with lower stomach acid, which affects protein and mineral absorption. Gentle supports like warm water with lemon before meals, diluted apple cider vinegar, slower eating, and thoroughly chewing help digestion work more efficiently without adding supplements.







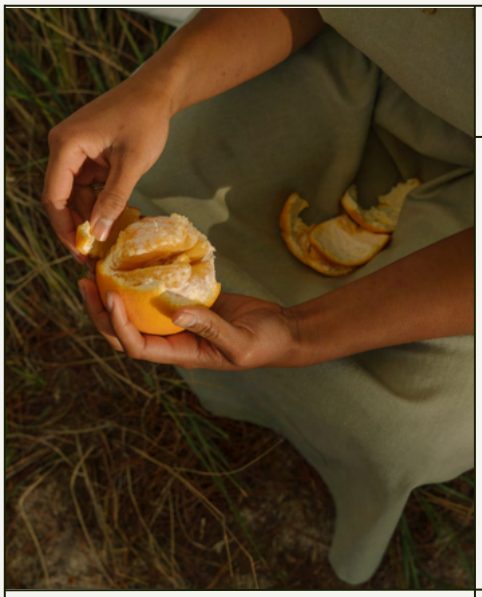
LABS TO CONSIDER

- TSH, Free T4, Free T3
- Reverse T3
- Thyroid antibodies
- Ferritin
- Vitamin D
- Zinc
- Selenium
- Cortisol
- Lipid panel
- CMP



SEX HORMONE IMBALANCES

SYMPTOMS



ESTROGEN DOMINANCE

- Breast tenderness or swelling
- Heavy periods
- Strong or heavy cramping
- Bloating that intensifies mid-cycle or before period
- PMS mood changes (irritability, tearfulness, sensitivity)
- Water retention around the abdomen or thighs
- Symptoms that worsen: before the period, after alcohol, or high-histamine foods
- Headaches before cycle starts

LOW ESTROGEN

- Vaginal dryness
- Painful intercourse
- Decreased libido
- Hot flashes or night warmth
- Dry eyes or dry mouth
- More forgetful or foggy during the first half of the cycle
- Slow recovery from exercise
- Joint stiffness around cycle changes
- Low mood earlier in the cycle

HIGH ANDROGENS

- Acne along the jawline or chin
- Hair thinning at the crown/part
- Increased facial hair or dark coarse hair on chin, chest, or abdomen
- Oily skin or scalp
- Deep cystic breakouts
- Irregular cycles
- No ovulation or very long cycles (35+ days)
- Weight gain or weight held around abdomen

LOW ANDROGENS

- Low libido
- Low motivation
- Difficulty building muscle
- Loss of strength despite training
- Fatigue that feels flat or low-energy rather than brain fog
- Low confidence or low drive
- Thinner skin
- Reduced tolerance to stress or exertion

LOW PROGESTERONE

- Trouble falling asleep the week before your period
- Spotting before your period starts
- Short cycles (often <26 days)
- Anxiety or restlessness mid-to-late luteal phase
- Feeling on edge before the period
- Infertility
- PMS that feels emotional, weepy, or reactive
- Feeling cold before period

CYCLE IRREGULARITIES

- Long cycles (>35 days)
- Short cycles (<26 days)
- Cycles without ovulation (no clear mid-cycle shift)
- Mid-cycle spotting
- Periods that alternate between heavy and light
- Severe PMS that resolves immediately when bleeding begins

HORMONE-DRIVEN MOOD & COGNITIVE CHANGES

- Irritability the week before your period
- Tearfulness or emotional reactivity in the luteal phase
- Feeling mentally sharp near ovulation, then foggy before the period
- Social withdrawal during the luteal phase
- Increased sensitivity to stress in late luteal phase



TARGETED SUPPORT

ALIGN TRAINING WITH YOUR CYCLE

Follicular phase: your body tolerates more intensity and builds strength easily. Luteal phase: cortisol runs higher, recovery is slower, and extra fueling is needed. Adjusting training reduces PMS, irritability, bloating, and mid-cycle crashes.

ADJUST CAFFEINE BASED ON YOUR CYCLE

In the luteal phase, caffeine can worsen anxiety, breast tenderness, and sleep problems, breast tenderness, and sleep disturbances for many women. Reducing caffeine here can noticeably improve symptoms.

INCREASE OMEGA-3S

For estrogen dominance, heavy PMS, painful periods, or androgen-driven symptoms (hair changes, acne, PCOS patterns), omega-3s reduce inflammation and help hormones work more effectively.

TRACK PATTERNS

Cycle length, PMS changes, ovulation-time symptoms, bleeding quality, sleep changes, and mood give valuable insight into whether estrogen, progesterone, or androgens are driving your symptoms.

INCREASE FIBER TO SUPPORT ESTROGEN METABOLISM

Certain fibers bind estrogen metabolites and help your body remove them through digestion. Flax, chia, oats, berries, lentils, and cooked cruciferous vegetables help reduce estrogen recycling and improve breast tenderness, heavy periods, and PMS.

PRIORITIZE CONSISTENT PROTEIN

Protein provides the building blocks for progesterone, DHEA, testosterone, and healthy ovulation. Eggs, poultry, fish, yogurt, legumes, tofu/tempeh, and collagen work well.

KEY MINERALS

Magnesium supports PMS, cramps, and sleep. Zinc is essential for ovulation and androgen balance. Selenium supports estrogen detox and thyroid-related hormone regulation. B-vitamins help your body process estrogen.

TIGHTEN BLOOD SUGAR STABILITY

Hormones are highly sensitive to glucose swings. Blood sugar swings increase cortisol, which reduces progesterone output and worsens PMS, irritability, cravings, breast tenderness, and mid-cycle bloating. Focus on protein and fiber at each meal, no "naked carbs," and especially avoid skipping meals in the luteal phase.

SUPPORT HORMONE CLEARANCE

Estrogen needs to be processed by the liver and removed through digestion. When either step slows, estrogen recirculates and drives PMS, breast tenderness, mood swings, and bloating. Cooked cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, kale, cauliflower,) support this process without stressing digestion. Pair them with detox-supportive foods like beets, garlic, and leafy greens, to keep estrogen moving out rather than building up.

LABS TO CONSIDER

- Estradiol
- Progesterone
- FSH, LH, DHEA-S
- Total and free testosterone
- SHBG
- Prolactin
- Thyroid panel
- Fasting insulin/glucose
- DUTCH hormone panel

SYMPTOMS



LOW TESTOSTERONE

- Low libido or erectile changes
- Reduced motivation or drive
- Trouble building or maintaining muscle
- Fatigue that feels "flat"
- Low confidence or decreased decisiveness
- Slower recovery after workouts
- Increased abdominal fat
- Mood changes like irritability or low resilience
- Reduced strength despite consistent training

HIGH ESTROGEN

- Increased fat around chest or belly
- Softer chest tissue
- Mood swings or increased emotional sensitivity
- Water retention or puffiness
- Low libido with irritability
- Slower recovery and lingering soreness
- Increased alcohol sensitivity
- Heavier" or swollen feeling after high-carb meals

STRESS-SUPPRESSED TESTOSTERONE

- Wired-but-tired feeling
- Trouble relaxing or falling asleep
- Early morning awakenings
- Tension headaches or jaw tightness
- Lower resilience to stress
- Reduced competitiveness, drive or motivation
- Feeling emotionally numb or flat
- Mid-day fatigue despite caffeine

LOW DHEA / ADRENAL HORMONE RESILIENCE

- Feeling wiped out after stress
- Hard time recovering from travel or busy weeks
- Mood instability
- Feeling easily overwhelmed
- Brain fog after small stressors

LOW ANDROGEN RESPONSE

- Low libido despite normal testosterone
- Low drive despite normal testosterone
- Muscle weakness during basic tasks
- Slow muscle repair
- Fatigue out of proportion to activity
- Mentally foggy or unfocused
- Feeling physically "fragile"



MOOD + COGNITIVE CHANGES

- Irritability or short temper
- Lower stress tolerance
- Brain fog or poor concentration
- Low mood or emotional flatness
- Reduced motivation or mental drive
- Increased anxiety under pressure



TARGETED SUPPORT

SUPPORT MINERAL STATUS

Zinc is foundational for testosterone, sperm quality, and how your body responds to testosterone. Magnesium improves sleep, stress resilience, and training recovery. Selenium supports thyroid function, which drives metabolic energy and indirectly supports androgens. Food-first sources include seafood, eggs, nuts, greens, legumes, and whole grains.

INCREASE PROTEIN + STRENGTH STIMULUS

Testosterone is highly responsive to protein intake and strength training. Aim for steady protein across the day and consistent strength training that includes progressive overload. This combination improves libido, motivation, muscle repair, and overall androgen signaling.

SUPPORT DHEA + ADRENAL RESILIENCE

If stress suppressed testosterone or low DHEA is present, emphasize lighter training on high-demand days, adequate carbs around workouts, and consistent fueling. This helps support morning energy, emotional steadiness, and cognitive drive.

OPTIMIZE GUT + LIVER FUNCTION

Men with high estrogen or low testosterone often show slowed clearance of hormonal byproducts. Prioritize fiber, cruciferous vegetables, citrus, and allium-rich foods (garlic, onions) to improve clearance, reduce bloating, and support overall hormone balance.

ADD OMEGA-3S

EPA and DHA support healthy testosterone levels, reduce inflammation-driven estrogen shifts, improve morning energy, and enhance training recovery. Fatty fish, walnuts, flax, chia, and omega-3–rich eggs help normalize androgen signaling.

FUEL AROUND TRAINING

Low testosterone often coexists with under-fueling. Carbohydrates before and after strength training improve testosterone response, protect muscle mass, and reduce low/flat energy or irritability during heavy workloads.

OPTIMIZE RECOVERY CAPACITY

Low testosterone and low DHEA often show up as poor recovery, delayed soreness, and mid-afternoon fatigue. Prioritize full sleep cycles, regular hydration, and post-training fueling. Even small sleep deficits significantly lower testosterone the next day.







LABS TO CONSIDER

- Total and free testosterone
- SHBG
- DHEA-S
- Estradiol
- LH & FSH
- Prolactin
- Thyroid panel
- Fasting insulin and glucose
- Lipid panel
- DUTCH hormone panel

ADRENAL STRESS RESPONSE



SYMPTOMS

HIGH CORTISOL

- Feeling "tired but wired"
- Racing thoughts or difficulty shutting down at bedtime
- Restlessness in the body when trying to be still
- Startles easily
- Sensitivity to loud noises or overstimulation
- Overwhelmed by small tasks
- Irritability under stress
- Warmth/flushing during stress
- Waking suddenly with a racing heart



LOW CORTISOL

- Feeling deeply tired upon waking
- Needing caffeine to function
- Energy that feels low in the morning and improves later in the day
- Afternoon crash
- Fatigue after mild exertion
- Feeling sleepy after meals
- Feeling "empty," flat, or blank during stress
- Low motivation despite desire
- Reduced stress tolerance

DYSREGULATED CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

- Slow, dragging mornings
- Feeling more alive or productive late at night
- Inconsistent energy day-to-day
- Trouble waking up without multiple alarms
- Feeling thrown off easily by schedule changes
- Mid-afternoon fog that isn't meal related
- Waking during the night without explanation

STRESS-INDUCED NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Jaw clenching or teeth grinding
- Tension headaches
- Shoulder or neck tightness
- Shallow breathing during stress
- Feeling jumpy or easily overstimulated
- Inability to relax even when you have downtime

EMOTIONAL + COGNITIVE CHANGES

- Anxiety that feels physical (racing, jittery, wired)
- Lower emotional resilience over time
- Feeling flooded or overwhelmed easily
- Difficulty concentrating due to stress
- Memory issues during high stress
- Feeling detached or "checked out" when stress is chronic

IMMUNE + INFLAMMATORY CHANGES

- Getting sick more easily during stress
- Slower recovery after infections
- Increased allergies or histamine sensitivity during stress
- Flare-ups of autoimmune symptoms under chronic stress



SALT, FLUID, AND CRAVING PATTERNS

- Craving salty foods
- Feeling dehydrated despite drinking water
- Dizziness when standing quickly (orthostatic intolerance)
- Peeing frequently when stressed
- Feeling puffy or swollen when stress is high
- Low blood pressure tendencies

TARGETED SUPPORT

USE SLOW, CALMING WALKS

Outside of mealtime walks, slow deliberate walking is one of the fastest ways to calm adrenaline. Use 10–20 minutes of relaxed walking after stressful moments, not powerwalking or HIIT. This tells your body it is safe to relax.

SUPPORT THE MORNING CORTISOL RISE

Your natural morning cortisol rise sets the tone for energy, focus, and stress tolerance. Spend 5–10 minutes outside within 20 minutes of waking, without sunglasses. Natural light signals your adrenals to produce cortisol at the right time and reduces afternoon crashes and wired evenings.

CREATE A DOWNSHIFT WINDOW

A predictable period of lower stimulation helps the body clear cortisol in the evening. Think warm shower, stretching, gentle breath work, soft lighting, or low-stimulation activities. These cues retrains your stress system to shift out of alert mode.

MODIFY TRAINING IN HIGH-STRESS PHASES

When cortisol is elevated or inconsistent, high-intensity intervals increase irritability, sleep issues, and post-workout fatigue Focus on controlled strength work, mobility, or low-impact movement. Avoid training to failure until stress levels normalize.

PREDICTABLE INTAKE

For adrenal imbalance specifically, the nervous system responds strongly to inconsistency. Aim for a steady intake rhythm during the day to prevent adrenaline spikes or the "wired-but-tired" evening crash. This is less about blood sugar and more about reducing stress system reactivity.

STIMULANT TIMING

Adjust caffeine based on your stress pattern. High cortisol: avoid caffeine after midday; Low morning cortisol: delay caffeine until after food; Afternoon crashes: switch to lower-stimulation options. Proper timing prevents overstimulation and protects your natural cortisol slope.

CHOOSE CALMING EVENINGS MEALS

When the HPA axis is dysregulated, heavy, high-fat, or high-volume meals at night increase stress response. Choose warm, cooked meals with moderate carbohydrates to relax the body and support smoother sleep onset.

MORNING PROTEIN + ELECTROLYTES

Low cortisol often shows up as dizziness on standing, morning exhaustion, and salt cravings. Pair protein with electrolytes (eggs, Greek yogurt, salted broth, mineral beverages) to support the aldosterone–cortisol connection and improve morning energy and steadiness

MINERALS

The adrenal–aldosterone (fluid-balance) system relies heavily on consistent mineral intake Include sea salt, coconut water, potatoes, bananas, avocado, leafy greens, and pumpkin seeds to support fluid balance, cravings, and energy regulation.

LABS TO CONSIDER

- DHEA-S
- Prolactin
- Thyroid panel
- Fasting insulin and glucose
- DUTCH hormone panel

GASTRO-INTESTINAL FUNCTION



SYMPTOMS

UPPER GI / STOMACH ACID	DIGESTIVE ENZYME INSUFFICIENCY	GALLBLADDER & BILE FLOW
• Bloating or fullness shortly after eating • Burping, especially after carbs or protein • Feeling overly full after small meals • Nausea when hungry or after greasy foods • Heartburn or reflux • Food feels like it sits heavy in the stomach • Hiccuping easily or frequently • Visible food pieces in stool	• Greasy, shiny, or floating stools • Stools that float or stick to the bowl • Strong-smelling gas • Bloating 1–3 hours after eating • Cramping after fatty meals • Feeling depleted or fatigued after meals • Loose stools that come on shortly after eating	• Discomfort or tightness under the right rib area • Nausea after fatty foods • Pale or clay-colored stools • Greasy stools • Bloating after high-fat meals • Constipation with narrow, hard stools • Feeling worse after fried foods or dairy • "Sick" feeling after large restaurant meals
MALABSORPTION		**MICROBIOME IMBALANCE**
• B12 deficiency symptoms (numbness, tingling, low energy) • Iron deficiency that doesn't improve with supplements • Vitamins A, D, E, K deficiencies • Pale skin or brittle nails • Easy bruising • Hair shedding		• Excessive gas • Bloating that worsens as the day goes on • Severe bloating that makes the belly look swollen by night • Foul-smelling stools • Alternating constipation and diarrhea • Cramping relieved by popping • Symptoms improve temporarily with antibiotics • Feeling worse with onions, garlic, beans, or fiber
MOTILITY ISSUES	**FOOD SENSITIVITIES**	**GUT INFLAMMATION**
• Constipation • Straining during bowel movements • Urgency after meals • Diarrhea that hits suddenly • Feeling like you didn't fully empty your bowels • Stool that feels "stuck" • Needing coffee to have a bowel movement • Stools that come every 2–3 days rather than daily	• Bloating 1–4 hours after specific foods • Nausea or digestive discomfort after dairy or gluten • Cramping that starts hours after eating • Fatigue or fogginess after meals • Sinus pressure or congestion after eating certain foods • Skin flares tied to specific foods	• Sharp or burning abdominal discomfort • Cramping unrelated to fiber • Urgency with loose stools • Mucus in stools • Symptoms that get worse during stress • Worse symptoms after alcohol, spicy food, or high-sugar meals

TARGETED SUPPORT

ADDRESS MALABSORPTION PATTERNS

Absorption improves when digestion is supported. Favor cooked foods over raw, prioritize zinc/B12/iron/fat-soluble nutrient–rich whole foods, include protein at each meal, and avoid grazing which disrupts normal digestive movement.

SUPPORT STOMACH ACID PRODUCTION

Supporting healthy stomach acid helps digestion early in the meal and reduces fullness or pressure after eating. Choose warm meals, add lemon or vinegar with protein if tolerated, chew slowly, and avoid large amounts of fluid with meals to support upper digestion.

NORMALIZE GUT MOTILITY

Regular digestion depends on predictable routines. Support hydration earlier in the day, include warm fluids in the morning, maintain regular meal timing, add gentle daily movement, increase magnesium-rich foods, and avoid eating when you're highly stressed.

IDENTIFY FOOD SENSITIVITY PATTERNS

Food reactions can be delayed and subtle. Introduce new foods one at a time, use brief 1–2 day eliminations to test suspected triggers, pay attention to 1–4 hour delayed reactions, and rotate trigger foods rather than consuming the same irritants daily.

SUPPORT ENZYME FUNCTION

Digestive enzymes help break down fats, proteins, and complex meals. Include bitter foods to stimulate digestive juices, maintain consistent protein intake, favor cooked meals over large raw salads during symptom days, and keep portions moderate to reduce digestive stress.

REDUCE GAS + DISTENTION

Daytime-worsening bloating and gas often reflect excessive fermentation in the gut. Increase plant diversity slowly, choose cooked vegetables during high-bloat days, avoid skipping meals, and temporarily limit high-fermenting foods if they consistently trigger symptoms.

CALM GUT INFLAMMATION

An irritated gut often responds best to warm, consistent meals. Emphasize warm, cooked, low-fat meals during flare days, minimize alcohol and high-sugar meals, use gentle herbs like ginger or turmeric if tolerated, and keep meal timing steady to ease cortisol-driven irritation.

STRENGTHEN BILE FLOW

Healthy bile flow supports fat digestion and helps reduce right-side discomfort, nausea after fatty foods, and pale stools. Use bitter greens before meals, choose warm foods over cold smoothies, cook with olive oil instead of heavy saturated fats, keep fat portions modest, and avoid long fasting periods that can worsen bile-related symptoms.







LABS TO CONSIDER

- CBC
- Ferritin
- B12
- MMA
- Vitamin D
- GI-MAP
- Calprotectin
- Celiac panel



DETOXIFICATION & CELLULAR CLEARANCE

SYMPTOMS

CHEMICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

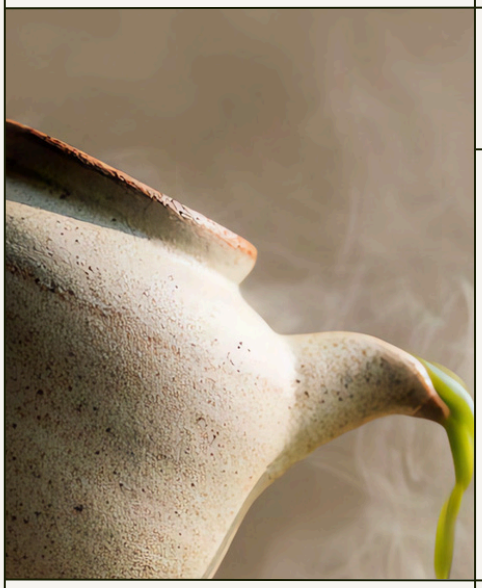
- Sensitivity to perfumes, candles, cleaners
- Headaches from chemical or synthetic smells
- Dizziness or nausea in heavily scented places
- Feeling unwell or symptomatic after salon treatments or strong odors
- Need for fresh air in environments with chemical exposure

ALCOHOL INTOLERANCE

- Flushing after small amounts of alcohol
- Headaches or pressure behind the eyes after 1 drink
- Feeling hungover after small amounts of alcohol
- Sleep disruption after even light drinking
- Taking longer to recover after drinking

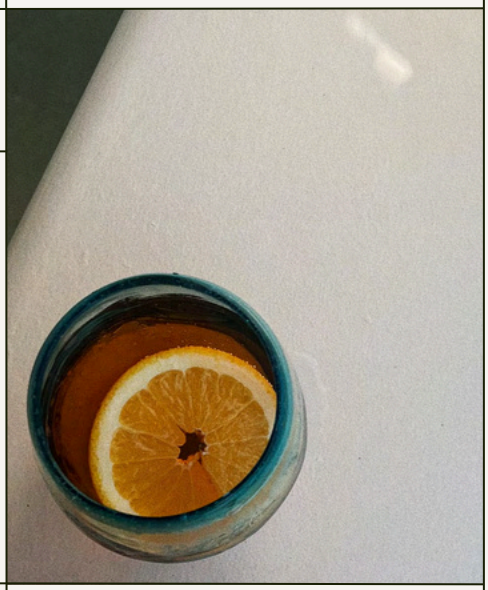
HISTAMINE OVERLOAD

- Flushing after wine
- Redness or itching after high-histamine foods
- Stuffy or congested nose after aged or fermented foods
- Heat in the face, chest, or ears after certain foods
- Sensitivity to leftovers or packaged foods



HORMONE SYMPTOMS FROM SLOW ESTROGEN CLEARANCE

- Worsening PMS with alcohol or chemicals
- Cyclical breast tenderness that worsens with exposures
- Headaches that happen around your menstrual cycle
- Feeling puffy during the luteal phase



LIVER & BILE-SPECIFIC PHYSICAL SIGNALS

- Nausea when exposed to alcohol or chemicals
- Feeling warm or flushed after certain foods
- Right-side upper abdominal discomfort after alcohol or chemical exposure
- Fatigue specifically triggered by alcohol or fragrances

BRAIN & NERVOUS SYSTEM REACTIONS

- Headaches triggered by chemical or alcohol exposure
- Brain fog triggered by environmental exposures (not food)
- Increased irritability or sensitivity after chemical exposure (paint, cleaners, perfumes)

SKIN MANIFESTATIONS

- Eczema or dermatitis flares after alcohol or exposures
- Jawline or neck breakouts after wine or processed foods
- Red skin patches that flare and fade
- Slow wound healing
- Skin becoming more reactive with environmental triggers

TARGETED SUPPORT

LOWER CUMULATIVE EXPOSURE LOAD

Reducing daily toxic load supports liver and cellular clearance. Avoid reheated oils and fried or charred foods, use glass instead of plastic for reheating, choose lower-VOC cleaning and personal-care products, and skip "detox teas" or laxative-based products that stress the gut.

STRENGTHEN PHASE II DETOX PATHWAYS

Phase II liver's detox pathways rely on steady protein intake and nutrient density. Include cruciferous vegetables, garlic, onions, and other sulfur-rich foods, pair meals with lemon or vinegar if tolerated, and avoid long fasting windows that slow detox efficiency.

SUPPORT NEUROINFLAMMATORY DETOX PATTERNS

Chemical and scent exposures place a burden on the brain and nervous system. Emphasize omega-3–rich foods, keep blood sugar steady, add polyphenol-rich foods like berries and herbs, pair caffeine with food, and minimize alcohol during symptomatic times.

IDENTIFY FOOD SENSITIVITY PATTERNS

Food-related chemical sensitivity often causes delayed symptoms. Use brief 1–2 day trials for suspected triggers, avoid stacking multiple new foods in one meal, track delayed responses, and rotate irritants instead of fully eliminating unless indicated.

IMPROVE BILE FLOW + ESTROGEN/HISTAMINE CLEARANCE

Bile flow keeps hormones and histamine byproducts moving. Chose warm meals, eat moderate fat portions, add bitter greens before meals, favor cooked vegetables over large raw salads, and avoiding long gaps between meals to prevent sluggish flow.

REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL REACTIVITY

Reducing sensory stress supports detox and nervous system regulation. Hydrate earlier in the day, keep regular meal patterns, ventilate your environment, choose fragrance-free products, and use gentle daily movement to support lymphatic movement and drainage.

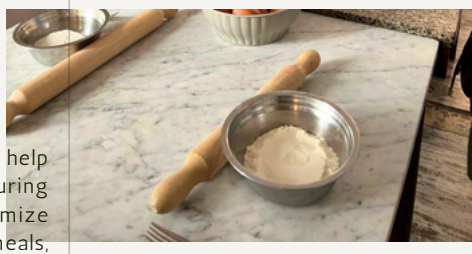
CALM GUT INFLAMMATION

Warm, low-fat meals help soothe an irritated gut during inflammatory days. Minimize alcohol and high-sugar meals, incorporate ginger or turmeric if tolerated, and keep meal timing steady to reduce cortisol-driven irritation that can worsen detox symptoms.

LOWER HISTAMINE BURDEN

Support histamine clearance by choosing fresh-cooked meals over leftovers, avoiding eating multiple high-histamine foods in one day, limiting alcohol during times when symptoms flare, emphasizing vitamin C–rich foods, and focusing on warm, gentle meals instead of cold or spicy options.







LABS TO CONSIDER

- CMP
- GGT
- Homocysteine
- Serum B12, MMA, Ferritin
- CBC
- DUTCH hormone panel
- GI-MAP
- Zonulin
- DAO



INFLAMMATION & IMMUNE ACTIVATION



SYMPTOMS

SYSTEMIC INFLAMMATION	IMMUNE OVERACTIVATION	
• Morning stiffness or body aches • Heavy or achy feeling in muscles • Feeling sore despite not working out • Puffy joints or mild swelling in hands/feet • Random aches that migrate (knees one day, back the next) • Flu-like malaise without actual illness • Low-grade, persistent fatigue that isn't relieved by rest	• Frequent congestion or sinus pressure • Increased sensitivity to perfumes, candles, chemicals • Stronger reactions to foods than before • Seasonal allergies worsening over time • Skin reactivity (rashes, redness, hives) • Feeling wiped out after mild exposures (dust, pollen, mold)	
CHRONIC LOW-GRADE INFLAMMATION	AUTOIMMUNITY	INFLAMMATORY SKIN SIGNS
• Brain fog or slowed mental clarity • Low mood or flat feeling • Reduced stress tolerance • Trouble concentrating when joints flare • Feeling tired but not sleepy	• Symptoms that get better for a while, then flare again • Flare-ups triggered by stress or infections • Joint swelling or stiffness in the morning • Tingling, numbness, or unusual nerve sensations • Dry eyes or dry mouth • Low-grade fevers during flares	• Eczema patches • Psoriasis flare-ups • Burning, itchy, or reactive skin • Red skin patches that flare and fade • Slower wound healing • New skin sensitivity that wasn't there before
DIGESTIVE SYMPTOMS (INFLAMMATION-DRIVEN)	INFECTION SUSCEPTIBILITY & RECOVERY ISSUES	TEMPERATURE & SENSATION CLUES
• Cramping with loose stools • Bloating • Increased urgency • Mucus in stool • Symptoms that worsen after alcohol, sugar, or gluten-containing foods	• Getting sick easily • Infections lasting longer than expected • Feeling exhausted for days after a cold • Needing more time to bounce back from workouts or stress • Fatigue lingering after viral infections	• Body heat rising at night or during flares • Feeling unusually warm without a fever • Night warmth or sweats during immune activation

TARGETED SUPPORT

LOWER DAILY INFLAMMATORY LOAD

Build meals around whole-food proteins and complex carbohydrates, limit added sugar and reduce alcohol during flare periods. Cooked vegetables are easier during inflammatory periods, and avoiding heavy high-fat + high-carb meals helps reduce inflammation.

REDUCE HISTAMINE + ALLERGY-DRIVEN INFLAMMATION

Choose fresh-cooked meals rather than leftovers, limit high-histamine foods during flare weeks, and reduce alcohol. Increase vitamin C–rich foods and bring omega-3–rich foods into the rotation several times per week to help calm allergy-type reactions.

STABILIZE IMMUNE TRIGGERS THROUGH DIGESTION

Use warm, cooked meals when digestion is sensitive. During flare periods, limit gluten and alcohol, pair carbohydrates with protein to stabilize blood sugar, and avoid highly processed snacks that increase inflammation.

LOWER NEUROINFLAMMATORY BURDEN

Pair caffeine with food, keep blood sugar stable throughout the day, and emphasize omega-3s and polyphenol-rich foods. Limit artificial fragrances, aerosols, and evening screen-time, replacing them with low-stimulation routines to support nervous system recovery.

STRENGTHEN INNATE IMMUNE RECOVERY

Prioritize consistent sleep and hydration to support immune signaling and lymphatic flow. Include zinc- and selenium-rich foods, keep electrolytes steady during recovery, and reduce intense workouts during active illness or flares to avoid prolonging symptoms.

PROTECT JOINTS + CONNECTIVE TISSUE

Support joint repair with protein-rich meals, bone broth, or collagen foods. Add antioxidants from berries, herbs, and green tea, and choose anti-inflammatory fats like olive or avocado oil instead of seed oils.

SUPPORT GUT-IMMUNE REGULATION

Avoid combining multiple gut irritants in the same day (sugar + snacks + alcohol). Include gentle fermented foods if tolerated, choose cooked vegetables at lunch and dinner during reactive periods, and rotate protein sources to support microbiome resilience.







LABS TO CONSIDER

- hs-CRP
- ESR
- ANA + reflex panel
- CBC with differential
- Vitamin D
- Zinc, copper, selenium
- Ferritin
- GI-MAP
- Thyroid panel



MITOCHONDRIAL & ENERGY PRODUCTION

SYMPTOMS

PHYSICAL ENERGY IMPAIRMENT	POST-EXERTIONAL FATIGUE	MUSCLE FUNCTION & WEAKNESS PATTERNS
• Feeling physically exhausted even after light activity • Heavy, weighted-limb feeling during simple tasks • Needing frequent breaks during activities you used to tolerate • Muscles "burn out" faster than they should • Feeling drained after standing or walking for long periods	• Feeling wiped out hours after exertion • Next-day crash from exercise ("delayed fatigue") • Needing unusually long recovery time after workouts • Muscle soreness that lingers longer than normal • Body aches or soreness that feel disproportionate to the activity level • Difficulty completing workouts you used to do easily	• Muscle weakness without obvious cause • Muscles tiring quickly with routine tasks • Trouble building or maintaining muscle mass • Feeling shaky or unsteady during physical effort • Difficulty with stairs or inclines that never used to be hard
	NEUROLOGICAL & COGNITIVE ENERGY ISSUES	TEMPERATURE & CIRCULATION CLUES
	• Brain fog that worsens with mental effort • Slow processing speed • Difficulty sustaining attention • Mental fatigue after meetings or heavy thinking • Head pressure or heaviness during mental effort	• Feeling cold easily • Cold hands or feet during fatigue • Sensation of "internal chill" when tired • Lightheadedness during activity
RECOVERY & REPAIR ISSUES	OXIDATIVE STRESS SYMPTOMS	METABOLIC ENERGY SIGNS
• Slow recovery after illness • Feeling depleted for days after travel, stress, or workouts • Slower healing after minor injuries • Frequent muscle tension or trigger points	• Increased sensitivity to chemicals or smells • Headaches triggered by exertion or stress • Feeling wired but physically exhausted • Body aches tied to oxidative load • Feeling worse after alcohol even in small amount	• Needing food immediately after small effort • Feeling energetically fragile • Quick dips in stamina throughout the day • Feeling like "the tank is empty" even after resting

TARGETED SUPPORT

SUPPORT MUSCLE RECOVERY + ATP REGENERATION

Eat protein plus complex carbohydrates within 1–2 hours after activity, reduce high-intensity training during fatigue phases, and emphasize walking, steady-state cardio, or mobility work. Increase total daily protein and use light evening stretching to lessen next-day soreness and exhaustion.

FUEL CONSISTENTLY TO PROTECT ATP OUTPUT

Stable energy depends on regular nutrient intake. Include protein at each meal, avoid long fasting windows during fatigue phases, and add complex carbohydrates around higher-activity periods. During low-energy days, choose balanced, moderate meals instead of very large or heavy portions to avoid worsening fatigue and digestion.

USE SMART EXERTION PACING

Train at moderate intensity, avoid training through exhaustion, and use interval pacing (effort followed by deliberate rest) to protect against next-day crashes. Schedule more demanding tasks earlier in the day when energy and alertness are naturally higher.

SUPPORT CIRCULATION + OXYGEN DELIVERY

Cold extremities, dizziness with activity, or exertion-related weakness can reflect reduced oxygen delivery to muscles. Front-load hydration, add electrolytes if dizziness occurs, take short walking breaks to improve blood flow, and emphasize iron-rich foods when ferritin is borderline to support oxygen delivery.

LOWER OXIDATIVE STRESS LOAD

Increase deeply colored produce, herbs, and vitamin C–rich foods to counteract oxidative strain. Rotate protein sources, reduce ultra-processed foods, and keep alcohol minimal during fatigue weeks to reduce oxidative stress and overall cellular workload.

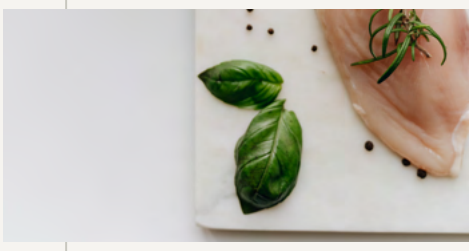
STRENGTHEN COGNITIVE ENERGY PATHWAYS

For mental fatigue or slow processing, eat protein within 60–90 minutes of waking, pair caffeine with food, and limit afternoon sugar. Use structured breaks rather than multitasking to reduce mental energy drain.

IMPROVE MITOCHONDRIAL NUTRIENT AVAILABILITY

Support mitochondrial enzyme function with B-vitamin–rich foods (eggs, legumes, poultry), magnesium- and zinc-containing foods, and iron when low. Add potassium-rich foods such as avocado or potatoes to support muscle contraction and nerve signaling, and use healthy fats like olive oil, nuts, and seeds for mitochondrial membrane stability.







LABS TO CONSIDER

- CBC + ferritin
- CMP
- Vitamin D
- B12 + MMA
- Homocysteine
- Iron panel
- hs-CRP
- Thyroid panel
- Organic Acids Test

NOTE



The labs recommended in this guide are most meaningful when interpreted through optimal ranges rather than the broad population based ranges printed on a standard report.

Conventional lab ranges reflect what is common in the general population, not necessarily what represents true health or balanced body function. The groups used to create these normal ranges often include people with undiagnosed inflammation, metabolic issues, or early dysfunction, which means these ranges can overlook early warning signs.

Optimal ranges are different. They reflect how the body functions when systems are balanced and working well. They highlight earlier shifts, the subtle points where the body begins to drift out of balance long before disease is diagnosed. This is why lab results can appear "normal" on paper even when the body is already showing clear signs that something is off.



This guide gives you something most people never get: answers, clarity, and direction. You now understand what's driving your symptoms, which systems in your body need support, and what actually has the potential to heal. For some people, that clarity alone is enough, and for others, it's the moment they realize they'd love someone to help them put it all together.

BUT IF YOU'RE READING THIS AND THINKING

"THERE ARE SO MANY LAYERS HERE, AND I'D LOVE A PLAN BUILT SPECIFICALLY FOR ME"

THAT'S EXACTLY WHERE FULL CAPACITY™ COMES IN

Inside Full Capacity, that's where we start. We sit down for a 75-minute deep dive into your full health history, and then we run the testing that actually looks where your bloodwork didn't, like your gut, your hormones, and how your body is making energy. For the first time, you're not guessing what applies to you, you know.

But a plan built for you is how we get there, not where we stop. Most approaches call it a win once your symptoms are back to baseline, where you're a little less bloated and crashing a little later but still spending so much of yourself just to function. I want so much more than that for you.

Over 16 weeks, we audit your whole body, rebuild the energy, focus, and presence you've been running without, and set a new standard for how you expect to feel. I'm adjusting your plan as your body changes and helping you stay consistent when life gets busy, so it works on your hardest weeks and not just your perfect ones.

And then one day you realize you woke up rested, made it through the afternoon without the crash, and still had energy after work for your relationship, your workouts, or that idea that's been sitting in your Notes app. You get dressed without planning around bloating, and you walk into the big meeting with a clear head.

That's life at full capacity, when your health stops being your ceiling and becomes the thing that lets you go after everything you're building.

APPLY FOR FULL CAPCITY ™

LEARN MORE: MYALIMENT.COM
INSTAGRAM: @DR.SHAELYNWATSON



YOU MADE IT THIS FAR. I'D TRULY LOVE TO SUPPORT YOU.

You've already put so much into your health, and you deserve to finally feel it pay off. If you're ready to stop just getting by and start living at full capacity, I'd love to be the one in your corner helping you get there!

APPLY FOR FULL CAPACITY ™

@DR.SHAELYNWATSON

DISCLAIMER

The Symptom-to-Solution Blueprint is designed for educational and informational purposes only. It is intended to help you better understand your symptoms, recognize patterns within your body, and begin building foundational support using a functional nutrition perspective.

This guide is not a substitute for personalized medical care, diagnosis, or treatment. While many individuals experience meaningful improvements by implementing the strategies within this resource, true root-cause resolution often requires individualized assessment, functional lab testing, and tailored support.
Every body is different. Your health history, physiology, and lifestyle all influence how symptoms present and how the body responds to interventions. For this reason, this guide should not be used as a replacement for working with a qualified healthcare professional.

By using this guide, you acknowledge that you are responsible for your own health decisions and outcomes.

APPLY FOR 1:1 SUPPORT