- Health self-care / Longevity



TIPS & TRICKS FOR BETTER HEALTH

Why not make these scientifically supported adjustments to 'biohack' your everyday life and improve your health and longevity.

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Biohacking is a term that is being used more in relation to health and longevity. It was first coined by US entrepreneur and author Dave Asprey in 2011 when he started looking into how he could improve his health. At age 28 he was overweight, had arthritis, pre-diabetes and the biochemistry of a 60-year-old. He says he went on a 'quest' to reclaim his health and vitality and claims that his research and biohacks led him to lose over 40kg, reverse his biological age and increase his IQ by over 12 points. "In order to upgrade yourself, you have to pay attention to the spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and physical parts of life," he says in his book *Game Changers*.

Biohacking is a broad term for non-specific lifestyle self-improvement. Yet in general a biohack is something that can help optimise the body's biology, with the goal to improve physical or mental performance, improve health or extend longevity. Biohacking can range from simple lifestyle adjustments – like tweaking your diet to boost vitality or practising meditation – to more advanced techniques such as taking nootropic supplements to improve cognition or using light therapy to regulate circadian rhythms. Asprey has tried many biohacks in his quest for longevity. Food is a big part of his focus, as is learning to manage stress.

"Don't make yourself crazy about getting it perfect all the time – stress like that makes you old. Just aim to get it mostly right at home, and you'll be so far ahead of the curve that you'll feel it," Asprey writes in his book, *Super Human*. Asprey isn't a fan of sugar and fried foods, favouring vegetables, grass-fed proteins and healthy fats. Over the years he has recommended various biohacks from intermittent fasting to supplements.

There are several types of biohacking, from nutrigenomics (how food interacts with genes) to grinder biohacking (involving implants or body modifications). While some methods are supported by science, others are experimental or controversial. Controversial biohacks often involve experimental genetic modifications and do-it-yourself therapies, raising concerns about safety and ethical implications. One controversial biohack that has received attention of late is DIY faecal microbiota transplantation (FMT), with serious adverse events reported including infection and hospitalisation. The technique involves transplanting a small sample of stool from a donor colon into a diseased colon.

While it has shown success in a clinical setting, gastroenterologist Dr Paul Feuerstadt says DIY FMT is very risky because the donors are not screened. "We can say that someone looks healthy, but we don't know what underlying autoimmune processes they have. If they are young, autoimmune processes may not have been fully developed yet and haven't clinically appeared."

There are also many scientifically supported biohacks that have been shown to support health and can be safely and easily implemented into everyday life, from what you eat to how you move.

EAT (ENOUGH) VEGGIES

"The best way to live a long time is to start eating a lot more vegetables," writes Asprey in *Super Human*. It's simple and obvious advice. The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend we eat five servings of vegetables (or more) every day plus two servings of fruit,

Why Biohacking is Big Business

According to SNS Insider, the biohacking market was valued at US$21.12 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach US$85.78 billion by 2032. Feeding that industry is a host of products and technology designed to boost wellness. Factors expected to drive the growth of the biohacking industry are the availability of wearable health trackers, genetic testing kits, smart devices, and apps that allow people to track and analyse their biometric data, leading to a more personalised and data-focused biohacking approach.

Technology-based biohacking includes wearable and diagnostic devices, such as smartwatches and rings, and blood pressure and glucose monitors. These devices generate physiological data, which helps biohackers monitor their health and performance. Other popular products in the industry include infrared saunas, weighted blankets, blue-light blocking glasses and light therapy devices.



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yet 2023 figures suggest only 4.2% of adults and 4.3% of children met the recommended daily intake (RDI) of fruit and vegetables to maintain good health.

A standard serve of vegetables is typically 75g, which equates to about half a cup of cooked green or orange vegetables (such as broccoli, spinach, carrot or pumpkin) or one cup of raw leafy or salad vegetables.

Most adults are advised to consume at least five serves of vegetables per day for a nutritious and balanced diet. Vegetables are nutrient dense, low in kilojoules and are a good source of minerals and vitamins, dietary fibre and a range of phytochemicals including carotenoids, all which have various health benefits.

Most vegetables are associated with reduced risk of cancers and heart disease; however, it's advised to consume a wide variety of vegetables because different vegetables provide different nutrients. For example, capsicum and broccoli are good sources of Vitamin C; carrots and sweet potatoes provide Vitamin A; and kale and spinach are packed with Vitamin K and magnesium. Vegetables can be raw or cooked, whole, cut-up, puréed, mashed, fresh or frozen. Get creative with where you add your veggies; add leftover cooked vegetables to your morning eggs, add spinach to your smoothie, and have a box of raw veggies on hand for a quick snack. An example of Recommended Dietary Intake to benefit health could be:

Breakfast: ½ cup spinach in omelette or in smoothie;
Snack: one cup of vegetable juice or raw carrot/celery sticks with hummus;
Lunch: one cup of salad on sandwich or as side dish;
Dinner: one cup mixed vegetables (broccoli, pumpkin, capsicum) as side dish.

> "BIOHACKING RANGES FROM SIMPLE ADJUSTMENTS TO MORE ADVANCED TECHNIQUES."

NURTURED BY NATURE

Research led by the University of Exeter found people who spend at least 120 minutes in nature a week are significantly more likely to report good health and higher psychological wellbeing than those who don't visit nature at all during an average week. Using data from nearly 20,000 people in England, it found it didn't matter whether the 120 minutes was achieved in a single visit or over several shorter visits.

Studies also show that being in nature has a positive effect on our bodies by reducing cortisol levels, muscle tension, and demands on our cardiovascular systems (lowers heart rate and blood pressure). Being out in nature often may lead to lower rates of heart disease and can also help you increase your Vitamin D level. Our increasing reliance on technology, combined with a global trend toward urban living, means many of us are spending less time outdoors.

"There is mounting evidence, from dozens and dozens of researchers, that nature has benefits for both physical and psychological human wellbeing," says psychologist Dr Lisa Nisbet. "You can boost your mood just by walking in nature, even in urban nature."

GET UP AND GO

Exercise is hailed as a cornerstone of a long and healthy life: modern science continues to back this up with compelling evidence. Regular physical activity doesn't just improve how we look or feel – it has a profound impact on how long we live and the quality of those years. "People who exercise regularly are a full decade younger than their peers on a cellular level," writes Asprey in *Super Human*.

Exercise influences longevity by improving cardiovascular health. Aerobic activity – like walking, cycling, or swimming – strengthens the heart muscle, lowers blood pressure, and helps regulate cholesterol levels. These changes reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death worldwide. A strong cardiovascular system means better circulation, more efficient oxygen delivery, and a healthier body overall.

Exercise also plays a major role in managing insulin sensitivity and blood sugar levels. This is especially important in preventing or managing type 2 diabetes, a chronic condition that shortens life expectancy. Resistance training and aerobic activity help muscles absorb glucose more efficiently, reducing blood sugar levels and lightening the load on the pancreas.

Physical activity also has a direct impact on the body's ageing process at a cellular level. Telomeres are the protective caps at the end of chromosomes that naturally shorten as we age. Shortened telomeres are associated with ageing and increased disease risk. Studies have shown that people who engage in regular physical activity tend to have longer telomeres, which suggests a slower biological ageing process. Exercise can also reduce inflammation, a known contributor to many chronic diseases. It doesn't take a marathon-level commitment to make a difference. Even moderate activity like brisk walking for 30 minutes a day can extend life and improve health outcomes.

NEXT LEVEL

These evidence-based techniques may improve health, but they are best done in consultation with your healthcare practitioner.



INTERMITTENT FASTING
Intermittent fasting is a method of dieting in which a person only eats between certain times and fasts in the periods in between. For example, a person may only eat in an 8-hour window between noon and 8pm, while fasting the rest of the day.



COLD WATER THERAPY
"Cold exposure helps mitochondria, and it also stimulates capillary beds to increase circulation in your skin," writes Asprey in *Super Human*. "Just aim the coldest water that will come out of your shower at your face and neck area for one minute. It will be unbearable for exactly three days, and that's if you can even do it for a full minute."



NOOTROPICS
Nootropics are substances which purportedly improve cognition. These compounds can be naturally occurring, like brahmi and ginkgo biloba, or synthetic, such as piracetam and modafinil. They fall into three general categories: dietary supplements, synthetic compounds, and prescription drugs.

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