



ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIE BLACKHALL-CAIN

30 best-ever home remedies

Charmaine Yabsley taps top health experts for their favourite natural remedies for sore throats, constipation, fatigue, pimples, sluggish mood, and more.

Soothe a sore throat

“In a small cup, mix together a tablespoon of manuka honey, a teaspoon of coconut oil, half a teaspoon of cinnamon and four drops of propolis,” says naturopath Amy Hotz. “Drop the mixture onto a sheet of baking paper and pop in the fridge for 15 minutes to harden, then suck as a throat lozenge. Propolis and manuka are powerful antibacterials, and a great natural alternative to conventional cold tablets.”

Be regular

“Good digestion is essential to get the most nourishment from food and ensure minimal discomfort after eating,” says nutritionist Belinda Reynolds. “However, too often we eat at our desks or on the run, and if we are stressed and distracted our blood is redirected elsewhere and so insufficient digestive juices are released and digestion is compromised. Eating mindfully is a great start to maximising your digestive system’s abilities. Focus on what you are eating, and chew every bite at least 20 times. This helps digestion and nutrient absorption, and also assists with weight

control, as slower eating gives your brain ample time to register that you have eaten enough. Gut bacteria play a critical role in digestion, particularly in the bowel where the tiny microbes ferment certain foods, like fibre, to produce beneficial compounds. You can support the growth and survival of these little guys by eating prebiotic fibre and fermented foods, which actually contain live micro-organisms and digestive enzymes, and taking a probiotic supplement if you have a gut bacteria imbalance for any reason, such as taking a course of antibiotics.”

Poor appetite can mean low hydrochloric acid levels. Take 10ml of apple cider vinegar before meals to boost acid secretion naturally.

In and out

“I recommend the yogic breathing exercise Nadi Shodhana, or alternate nostril breathing, for anyone wanting to de-stress,” says naturopath Amie Skilton. “You can do it anywhere, any time, and even just two minutes is really helpful. I often suggest doing it

before eating to bring down stress hormones, especially adrenaline, which helps digestion; it quite literally moves you from 'fight or flight' mode to 'rest and digest'. Learn how to do it with a video at www.artofliving.org."

Increase energy

"To boost energy, I recommend taking 1-2 teaspoons of organic apple cider vinegar in a glass of water with glucose powder," says Tanya Felli, founder of Ivadore. I also like organic carrot, beetroot and orange juice for a nutrient burst to counter fatigue, low mood, and depression."

Care for teeth

"Sage leaf is wonderful for teeth," says organic gardener Shelley Pryor. "Rubbing the fresh leaves over teeth makes them feel like they have just been cleaned; it also helps kill bacteria and remove stains from tea or red wine. I like infusing them as a tea, to keep gums firm and healthy."

Shampoo in shine

"If your hair is dark, make it super-shiny by pouring cooled, strong rosemary tea through it after shampooing," adds Pryor. "There's no

need to rinse, it smells great – and it helps with dandruff."

Jazz up your water

"Hydration is vital for optimum health: adequate water does more than just quench thirst, it also regulates body temperature and keeps tissues moist, especially in the brain, which is very sensitive to hydration levels," explains nutritionist Carolina Rossi. "Be mindful of green and black tea and coffee, which all have a dehydrating effect. Get into the habit of adding zing to water with fresh mint, lemon slices and chunks of ginger – they are all digestive stimulants, and will encourage you to drink more. In summer, I like fresh watermelon juice with a dash of lime. Watermelon is rich in lycopene and lime adds a dose of vitamin C."

Write it down

"Regular journaling can make all the difference for a healthy mind and positive attitude," says health coach Tracie Connor. "It helps you resolve difficult experiences, gain clarity around daunting decisions, and grieve a loss. Getting thoughts and feelings out of your head and onto paper or a screen in front of you helps to separate the emotions from the practicalities, and enables clearer reflection and processing. It also lets you validate your 'story' or situation, without another person's approval or comments, when that is not accessible or appropriate."

D-I-Y day spa

"Run a warm bath and add a box of Epsom salts and five drops of lavender essential oil," adds Connor. "The salts are high in magnesium, which is absorbed through the skin to relax muscles and calm nerves, while the scent of lavender has been clinically proven to reduce stress, slow heart rate and reduce blood pressure. Another great idea is to make a quick face mask and apply that before getting in the bath, as the steam will help it to work better: for normal skin, mash together avocado and coconut oil; or if your skin is oily, blend together banana, honey and a dash of lemon juice."

Baby yourself

"Always be kind to yourself – rest when your body tells you to," says yoga teacher Charlotte Dodson. "Soothe a weary head by massaging a few drops of peppermint oil into your temples. I like Child Pose, or Balasana, for massaging inner organs and giving yourself an inner soothing release. Start by kneeling and sitting

back onto your heels, then fold forward, resting your forehead on the floor, and lengthening your arms away from you – you can either reach your arms out in front to lengthen your spine, or fold them beside your legs, to make the pose more passive. Sit your buttocks heavily onto your heels to lengthen and create openness in the spine, and breathe deeply for 1-5 minutes – longer if you need to rest."

Clean and clear

"Got acne? Simply replace your toner with apple cider vinegar," suggests nutritionist Emily Holmes. "It provides antibacterial properties and also rebalances the skin's pH."

Ease exhaustion

"The ultimate do-it-yourself tip for stress and exhaustion is Esoteric Yoga," says yoga teacher Vicky Geary. "Founded by Serge Benhayon of Universal Medicine, this is 'inner-most union', and it is yoga for our current times. Nothing is needed except you and your body, and it can be done anywhere, at any time. You start with two simple, practical choices. Number one: Conscious Presence – this is keeping your mind with what you are doing, as you are doing it. Number two: Gentleness – moving in a way that is gentle for your body. The two choices sound simple, but together, their accumulated effects are powerful and deeply profound."

Tame your tummy

"Have you noticed how your stomach plays up when you get stressed?" asks naturopath Chantelle Bell. "Chamomile tea is perfect for overwhelming days. You can also take the tincture, diluted in a little water, to ease that uncomfortable tightness that leaves you feeling gassy and bloated."

Tap yourself happy

"Sometimes it's just not possible to meditate or do yoga, but Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) offers instant relief, and it is simple, discreet, and non-invasive," says health coach Vanessa Lougoon. "EFT is a form of psychological acupuncture, where you tap on meridian points to clear emotional blocks from your body's bioenergetic system. To instantly calm a stress response, start tapping the side of your thumb on the outside edge of the nail, while tuning in to the stressor. After a few seconds, work and tap your way through all your fingers; repeat until you feel relief."

Take five

"Five things to keep in mind daily will give

* Food remedies

Master herbalist Brigitte Mars and Chrystle Fiedler share time-tested wisdom from Grandma's kitchen for treating common ailments.

We can't always avoid getting sick. It can even be an opportunity to rest. These natural food remedies can help you get through an illness with a minimum of distress.

Colds and flu

Mix 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar and 2 teaspoons of honey in 1 cup of hot water and drink three times daily to break up mucus congestion. Diluted lemon in hot water can relieve fever: it has antimicrobial properties and helps to thin mucus secretions.

Sunburn

Look in your fridge for relief. Blend up some yoghurt and cucumber and apply directly to the skin or apply a grated potato poultice. Or, apply a compress of cold milk. For sunburned eyes, apply cucumber slices, grated raw potato or apple, or chilled chamomile tea bag poultices.

Shingles

With an inflammatory condition like shingles, you'll want to eat foods to cool the blood, mostly fruits and vegetables. Mung beans, apples, beetroot, carrots, cucumbers, lemon, and water can all be taken. Drink 1.4 litres of beetroot,

celery or cucumber juice daily (unless pregnant) to alkalise the body and cool inflammation internally.

Infertility

If you are trying to conceive, make this shake. It's great for both of you in providing protein and essential fatty acids.

- 1½ cups fresh raw almond milk
- 1 tablespoons raw tahini
- 1 tablespoon raw honey
- 1 tablespoon raw pumpkin seeds
- 2 ripe bananas

Mix ingredients together well. Shake the mixture and toast to each other and new life.

Haemorrhoids

Blueberries, blackberries, cranberry, raspberries, and cherries all contain flavonoids that strengthen the walls of veins. It is also helpful to take a supplement of 500mg of bioflavonoids plus rutin daily to strengthen capillaries.

Bruises

Consume plenty of vitamin K-rich foods, such as green leafy vegetables, which improve your blood-clotting ability. Nettle tea is also high in vitamin K. Drinking 950ml daily can help if you bruise easily.

Brigitte Mars and Chrystle Fielder are the authors of *The Country Almanac of Home Remedies* (Fair Winds Press), available in all good bookstores, and from which this extract is reproduced with kind permission.

Chamomile is one of those wonderful herbs with multiple uses: it reduces stress, eases indigestion, soothes rashes or prickly heat, cures cradle cap and colic, and even lightens your hair.



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warm water each morning; as well as restoring pH balance in the gut, it stimulates digestion and elimination. To make an impact on systemic pH, the best option is half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda in water, half an hour before meals."

Listen carefully

"Attaining true vitality is simple: we just need to stop, feel, and listen," says life coach Martin Gladman. "The human body is super-intelligent, but we often override its messages, doing what we want to do instead of honouring what the body is asking of us. If we stop, we give ourselves the opportunity to make a choice about the quality of our next move – whether we make it one that supports and nourishes us, or one that harms and further drains us."

Press the point

"Acupressure is an easy and effective D-I-Y remedy, especially for mild headaches brought on by tension in the neck or shoulders," says Connor. "Press the soft pad area of your hand between the index finger and thumb, using the index finger and thumb of the opposite hand, and hold for a few minutes while you take some deep breaths."

Solve sinus pain

"My go-to sinus remedy is to have a nip of wasabi paste or mustard every few hours," adds Connor. "Yes, it's an intense experience! But it definitely breaks up mucus and clears the sinuses."

Let the wind go free

"Peppermint and chamomile are excellent for releasing trapped wind and so easing indigestion and bloating," says Connor. "Make an extra-strong brew by steeping two teabags of each herb, four in total, in a cup of boiling water for 10 minutes. Sip - and feel the relief within seconds."

Go for garlic

"A garlic oxymel is a traditional home remedy for sore throats, colds, and flu," says Connor. "It's easy to make, and lasts up to three months in the fridge. Simply combine 100ml apple cider vinegar and 1 teaspoon each of fennel and caraway seeds in a saucepan, bring to the boil, then remove from heat and allow to cool and steep for five minutes. Strain liquid, and return to the saucepan. Peel and crush 10 large garlic cloves (the crushing releases the active compounds) and add to the liquid. Simmer for five minutes, then stir through 3 tablespoons of raw honey, and refrigerate. Take 1-2 teaspoons up to every two hours."

Kick constipation

"An oldie but a goodie is to eat four to eight prunes a day," says naturopath Katherine Maslen. "Another effective remedy for moving things along is taking a tablespoon of psyllium husk daily. Make sure you are drinking enough water, especially when taking additional fibre."

Fight athlete's foot

"This is caused by a fungal overgrowth, and it can be hard to shift," says Maslen. "Combine five drops of neat tea tree oil with 1 teaspoon of coconut oil and apply it to help resolve the problem."

Heal a break

If you are recovering from a bone fracture, Maslen has this remedy: "Bone broth is great for helping to heal and repair injuries. The gelatine and minerals that leach from the bones help your body tissues to repair. To make it, put some organic chicken or beef bones in a slow cooker with a few veggies – carrots, celery, onion and garlic all work well. Cover with water and add a decent splash of apple cider vinegar – this helps to get the minerals out of the bones. Cook on low heat for 24-48 hours, strain, and then drink 2-3 cups daily. You can also freeze the broth in ice cube trays for later – just pop a few cubes into a cup and add boiling water."

Say goodnight

Can't sleep? Maslen's tips will have you nodding off in no time. "Turn off bright lights at least one hour before bed, and use low-lit lamps instead. Don't look at any screens in the hour before bedtime – they stimulate your pituitary gland, which tells your body that it's 'awake' time. Smart phones in bed are a big no-no. Have a wind-down routine – shower, book, deep breathing exercises – to train yourself to get into a relaxed state of mind. Move your body immediately after you get up in the morning, to reset your sleep-wake cycle. For example, doing 10 star-jumps would be great. Avoid coffee, tea, cola and any other stimulants from noon onwards, so they are all well out of your system before bed time."

Make scents

"If you suffer from anxiety, try blending a few drops of lavender, clary sage, rose, bergamot, neroli, sandalwood or neroli essential oil in a base oil like jojoba, and massage it into the wrists, feet, and behind the ears," says Rachel Holm of Hanako Therapies. "An important acupressure point is Kidney 1, located on the soles of the feet just beneath the pads at the base of the second and third toes. This point – quite literally – has a very grounding effect, helping to draw excess energy away from the upper part of the body, and so it is excellent for anxiety. Knead

the point with your thumb for two minutes, and feel the calm wash over you."

Stay strong

"The plant kingdom offers a bounty of remedies to support your system naturally in fighting off colds and infections, but eating optimal quantities of them can be tricky, especially if your appetite is poor," says Kirsten Shanks, found of Orchard Street Juice Bar. "That's the brilliance of juice, as it supplies numerous immuno-supportive nutrients in an easily assimilated form. Start with a base of beta-carotene-rich carrot, add orange and lemon for vitamin C,

then add parsley and oregano for their antimicrobial properties, turmeric to fight inflammation, a chunk of circulation-stimulating ginger, and a sprinkle of probiotics for their beneficial bacteria."

Take notes

Singer-songwriter and life coach Gemma Louise Kirby suggests keeping a little notebook or diary with you at all times. She discourages the use of electronic devices, because she says they kill your natural creativity. "Using an old school pen and paper allows you the freedom to express yourself quickly and completely, without the diversion of the device, or of social media, checking emails, and so on. Turning it on, finding the app, typing in caps – these all interfere with the natural flow of feeling, and make writing contrived."

Smooth things out

"Smoothies are a simple, convenient and tasty way to sneak a whole lot of therapeutic, gut-healing ingredients into your diet," adds Kirby. "I encourage clients to add things like slippery elm powder, a probiotic, manuka honey, and even a tablespoon of bone broth to their daily smoothie, for their healing, anti-inflammatory, and digestion-soothing properties. Just be careful not to use too much dairy or fruit, as both can potentially upset an already troubled tummy."

Power walk

"Walking is an excellent, accessible form of exercise that is often overlooked," says Kirby. "It keeps the lymphatic system moving, improves circulation and detoxification, reduces stress and anxiety, and is quite effective at burning fat, particularly if you walk for a long period and outside in nature, preferably by water or somewhere leafy and green, with the sun shining, to get your vitamin D. I also like to recharge my mind by listening to podcasts and audiobooks while I walk."

Treat your feet

"A warm footbath before bed is a great remedy for insomnia," says naturopath Kate Johnston. "Not only is it relaxing, but because the blood flow is directed to the feet and away from the head, it helps to calm an overly busy mind. Try adding magnesium chloride flakes, or Epsom salts, along with essential oils like lavender, peppermint, or clary sage to boost the calming effect." *



We forget that two-thirds of our body weight is water – so by the time you feel thirsty, you have actually been dehydrated for up to an hour.

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