

THE MASTER *Series*

Top Tips to Boost Your Immunity

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THE FUNCTION OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Your first line of defense against illness and infection is your immune system. Your body's challenges will be easier for you to overcome if your immune system functions properly.

The immune system is made up of various organs, cells and proteins, all of which play a vital role in protecting your body from harmful substances and germs that could make you ill. A healthy immune system safeguards us by preventing intruders, or antigens, from entering the body. This is facilitated by white blood cells moving through the body's blood and tissues, searching for foreign invaders such as bacteria,

viruses and fungi. These are known as antigens; when the white blood cells locate them, they launch an immune attack before they can proliferate. When functioning correctly, the immune system can deter health issues like cancer and the common cold.

An issue, like an infection, develops when your immune system cannot adequately fend off an invader. The immune system occasionally misinterprets the body's cells as foreign ones and launches an attack. This is known as an autoimmune response which can cause issues, including autoimmune diseases and allergic responses.



DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

The immune system is incredibly intelligent and can hold a record of the microbes it has dealt with via memory cells. Memory cells are two subtypes of white blood cells (B-lymphocytes and T-lymphocytes) that the immune system uses to keep a log of every pathogen it has ever eliminated. If the microbe enters the body again, it will be immediately recognized and destroyed before it has a chance to grow and make you ill or display any symptoms.

Your immune system comprises an intricate network of tissues and organs which cooperate to keep you healthy and aid your recovery from illnesses. It is composed of the following:

1 White blood cells

Your immune system's main participants are white blood cells. They originate from your bone marrow and are a component of your lymphatic system.

White blood cells circulate through the blood and tissues in your body, scanning them for foreign invaders (microbes) such as bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi. They hunt them down and begin an immune response. Examples of white blood cells include lymphocytes such as B-cells, T-cells, natural killer cells, and numerous other resistant cell types.

2 Lymph nodes

To prevent germs from spreading to other areas of your body and making you ill, these tiny glands filter and eradicate potentially harmful invaders. Immune cells in lymph nodes examine these invaders, which causes lymphocytes to be activated, replicated, and sent to combat them. Lymph nodes can be found throughout your body, including your neck, armpits, and groin and when swollen, it is usually a sign that your body is battling an infection.

The body's lymphatic system is a network of tiny tubes. The lymphatic system's primary functions are as follows:

- Control the body's fluid levels
- Respond to microorganisms
- Deal with cancer cells
- Deal with cell by-products that would otherwise cause sickness or diseases
- Absorb a portion of the dietary fats from the gut

3 Skin and mucous membranes

The first line of defense against preventing and eliminating infections from entering your body is your skin which acts as a protective barrier. In addition to secreting other defense-enhancing immune cells, skin produces helpful oils. The respiratory, digestive, urinary, and reproductive pathways are lined with mucous membranes.

These membranes, which lubricate and moisture surfaces, secrete the mucus. Cilia, which resemble hair-like structures, transport germs out of the airways by adhering to mucus in the respiratory system. Your nose's tiny hairs act as a germ magnet. Enzymes may guard against and eradicate germs and can be found in sweat, tears, saliva, mucous membranes, and vaginal secretions.

4 Bowel and stomach

Immediately upon entering your body, many germs are killed by stomach acid. Additionally, your intestines contain good bacteria that eliminate dangerous bacteria.

5 Antibodies

The body uses antibodies to fight off microorganisms and the toxins they release. They do this by identifying antigens on the microbe's surface or in the chemicals it produces. These antigens are then designated for destruction by antibodies, other cells, proteins, and chemicals.

6 Tonsils and adenoids

Because they are situated in the nasal passage and the throat, tonsils and adenoids can catch foreign invaders like bacteria or viruses as soon as they enter the body. Immune cells that make antibodies can protect you from foreign invaders that can infect your lungs and throat.

7 Spleen

This organ filters blood, eliminating microorganisms and destroying old or damaged red blood cells. Additionally, it creates immune system components that combat disease, including antibodies and lymphocytes.

8 Bone marrow

The spongy material found inside your bones is called bone marrow. It creates the white blood cells that fight infection, the platelets that aid in blood clotting, and red blood cells that deliver oxygen throughout our bodies.

9 Thymus

Your blood is filtered and monitored by the thymus. T-lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell, are produced here.



CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Your immune system can be harmed or disrupted by various deficits and illnesses. Some medications, such as immunosuppressants, can hinder your body's ability to fight infection, and medical issues make it difficult for your immune system to defend against harmful pathogens. They consist of the following:



Autoimmune disorders - This happens when the body's immune system unintentionally targets healthy cells. Examples of widespread autoimmune disorders include lupus, diabetes, Hashimoto's disease, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Allergies - The immune system reacts when the body overreacts to a benign substance like certain foods or pollen. Histamines, which produce allergy symptoms, are released by your body in response to allergy triggers. A modest allergic reaction, such as sneezing or a sore throat, can become severe, leading to more chronic breathing problems or extreme conditions.



Cancer - Specific cancers, such as leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma, directly impact the immune system. These tumors develop as a result of unchecked resistant cell growth.



Infections - An impaired immune system can often lead to a higher risk of contracting infections. Two well-known infections that impair the immune system are HIV and mononucleosis (mono); both of which can be very severe.

WAYS TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

You may hear of various methods to boost your immune system; however, it is important to do so safely and healthily. Numerous items on store shelves claim to strengthen or improve immunity. However, from a scientific standpoint, the idea of increasing immunity this way could pose a certain amount of risk. Increasing the number of cells in your body, whether immune cells or other types, is not always good. For instance, athletes who “blood dope”—pump blood into their systems to increase the number of blood cells in their bodies and improve performance—run the risk of strokes.

Therefore, it is essential to boost your immunity in a holistic way that considers both the mind and body and benefits you as a whole. When thinking about immunity, we must consider that our minds play a role in the process. Physical and emotional health are closely linked in what is known as the mind-body

connection. Biology, chemistry, and mood all impact our thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. Together, these elements significantly affect how stressed and physically well we feel. This applies to our immunity similarly; the kinder we are to ourselves, and the better care we take, the stronger our immune system will be.

▷ Yoga

Practicing yoga daily has been shown to have a beneficial impact on the mind and body. No matter how busy your schedule may be, yoga offers a gentle, natural way to strengthen the immune system. Yoga can help to strengthen the lungs and respiratory system, stimulate the lymphatic system to eliminate toxins from the body, and bring oxygenated blood to the various organs to ensure optimal operation. It also lowers stress hormones that weaken the immune system.

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that inflammation can be linked to many chronic diseases, but yoga can bring down inflammation in practice. When we speak of inflammation and illnesses, it concerns conditions such as arthritis. Yoga is one of the most valuable things we can do to benefit our body because of gentle breathing, the incorporation of mindfulness and gentle movement. The reduction of stress through yoga will help your body optimize its functionality and, in turn, help to boost your immune system.

In addition, your lymphatic system is crucial for good circulation, cleansing, and immunity. Lymphocytes, antibodies that fight disease, metabolic waste products, and lymph fluid are all efficiently circulated throughout the body by a complex system of blood vessels, particularly in the fascial system.

Yoga, self-myofascial release, and yoga pranayama (breathing exercises) encourage the body to rid itself of toxins, which supports a healthy lymphatic system. Additionally, the lymphatic system is pumped while you practice yoga by contracting your muscles while you move and breathe. Any sort of mindful, energetic movement increases the effectiveness of the lymphatic system, but yogic practices, in particular, can lessen the adverse effects of chronic stress on the body. Strong immunity is boosted through this combination.



▷ Walking

Regular walks will benefit your immune system as this type of gentle exercise encourages immune cells to function well by boosting blood flow, lowering stress and inflammation, and fortifying antibodies. The immune system's white blood cells may circulate throughout the body more efficiently while the blood is moving, which is made possible by frequent walking.

Physical activity that reduces stress can help here because stress can reduce the immune system's efficacy. The immune system operates more effectively when there is less inflammation. With its anti-inflammatory effects, even 20 minutes of strenuous exercise a day can strengthen the immune system. Making moderate exercise a daily routine for 30 minutes, such as a brisk walk or bike ride, can help regulate immune cell renewal and reduce inflammation. Daily exercise encourages the immune system's top defense cells to join the fight. The more you exercise, the better equipped your body will be to fight off illness.

▷ Eating A Healthy Diet

A balanced diet incorporating healthy food is a brilliant way to boost your immune system, according to Ayurveda - an alternative medicine system with historical roots in the Indian subcontinent. Ayurvedic medicine is still a traditional technique used as a treatment for illnesses such as cancer.

Certain foods will stimulate cell functioning, which will, in turn, boost immunity. The vitamins A, B6, B12, C, and D, copper, folate, iron, selenium, and zinc, all contribute to a healthy immune system. This does not imply that you must take supplements; some vitamins might be dangerous if used in significant quantities. Instead, concentrate on obtaining these nutrients through a balanced, healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, dairy products or fortified substitutes, meat, fish, and plant proteins like pulses.

While research in this area is still in its development, a healthy gut microbiome - the assortment of

bacteria and other organisms in your intestine - has also been connected to a role in our immune system. Consuming a wide range of high-fiber plant-based foods, such as fruit and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, beans, and lentils, is the best approach to do this. Fermented foods like kefir and live yogurt may also be beneficial. Try increasing the number of vegetables in your main meal and review our suggestions for consuming more pulses. Eating this way is fantastic for your

The following foods are examples of the things you can eat to help to boost your immune system:

-  **Berries**
-  **Citrus fruits such as oranges and lemons**
-  **Turmeric**
-  **Oily fish**
-  **Fish oil**
-  **Brightly coloured vegetables such as carrots and peppers**
-  **Leafy greens**
-  **Garlic**
-  **Ginger**
-  **Broccoli**
-  **Nuts and seeds**
-  **Yoghurt**
-  **Spices**

▷ Herbs

Herbs are a natural and safe way to boost your immune system. Since ancient times, herbs have been utilized to boost the immune system and provide direct, long-lasting health support. The best part is that you can quickly grow immune-stimulating, therapeutic herbs in your backyard garden, balcony, or windowsill. Herbs to help you boost your immune system include the following:

Coriander



This herb is brilliant for helping to boost immunity. This is because coriander contains many phenolic acids, sterols, coumarins, and other essential oils. Coriander seed oil is a natural antibiotic in addition to being antibacterial. Coriander can be very healthy when consumed as a tea, oil, or tincture.

Echinacea

This is one of the most popular immune-boosting plants. Numerous essential oils, flavonoids, polysaccharides, and vitamin C found in the plant boost immunity and stave against colds. Echinacea can be consumed as a tea or tincture for medical purposes.



Oregano



This is an effective natural antibiotic that has various medicinal benefits that should not be disregarded. When consumed as a tea or oil, oregano's antimicrobial properties help to strengthen our immune system naturally and reduce the risk of some diseases.

Thyme



This is native to the Mediterranean region and is one of the most significant therapeutic herbs for bolstering the immune system against colds and respiratory illnesses. Thyme can be used fresh, dried, as an oil or tincture, and is rich in essential nutrients and zinc. Try making an excellent herbal tea by infusing thyme with water to strengthen your immune system.

Ginseng

This herb has been shown to support the HPA axis, also known as the hypothalamic, pituitary, and adrenal axis, which controls how the immune system reacts to stress.

Ginseng can maintain the immune system's balance by controlling different resistant cell types, including T cells, B cells, natural killer cells, and macrophages, which recognize and neutralize threats to the body.



Chamomile



Chamomile aids in the body's production of white blood cells that eliminate bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Chamomile tea is an excellent strategy to strengthen our immune systems, clear the airways and ease cold symptoms.

▷ Homeopathic Medicine

Homeopathy is a natural form of holistic medicine that encompasses both the mind and the body. Homeopaths believe that there is only one central imbalance. For example, if there is a calm pond and a pebble is thrown into the center, it will cause a ripple effect toward the edges because the balance has been disturbed. Homeopathy works off of a similar philosophy by addressing the central imbalance by providing constitutional treatment which will boost the entire system, including the immune system.

Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician and researcher established homeopathy in the late 18th century.

He found that all illnesses, regardless of their underlying cause, result from disturbances in the patient's "vital force." The body's "life force," also known as "Chi" has an energetic quality recognized in traditional Chinese medicine.

By restoring the patient's "vital energy," Hahnemann and his colleagues showed how most chronic and acute ailments could be treated using homeopathic medication combined with the body's innate capacity to mend and heal itself.

Furthermore, homeopathy can be used to treat stress; overall stress reduction will lead to better immune system functioning.

Since homeopathy is non-toxic and stimulates the body, it will help to provide overall health and well-being and boost immunity.

▷ Meditation

The practice of meditation has been used for many years. Meditation is often used to unwind and reduce tension. Deep relaxation and mental calmness are two effects of meditation. You can focus your thoughts and stop the constant stream of disorganized ones stressing you out when you meditate. The approach may lead to improved mental and emotional health.

According to recent studies, practicing mindfulness meditation can increase immune system function, lower blood pressure, and cognitive function, among other aspects of health and performance. In essence, your body responds by calming down when you practice mindfulness meditation, which involves paying close attention to the present moment without judgment. This gives your immune system the tools it needs to protect you.

If you have a medical problem, especially one that could be made worse by stress, meditation may also be helpful.

Some studies also indicate that meditation may assist individuals in reducing the symptoms of ailments like:

- Anxiety
- Asthma
- Chronic pain
- Depression
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Headaches and migraines
- Cancer

On the whole, meditation is a useful tool that can help you manage your mental health and well-being, which will help reduce stress and, in turn, boost your immunity.

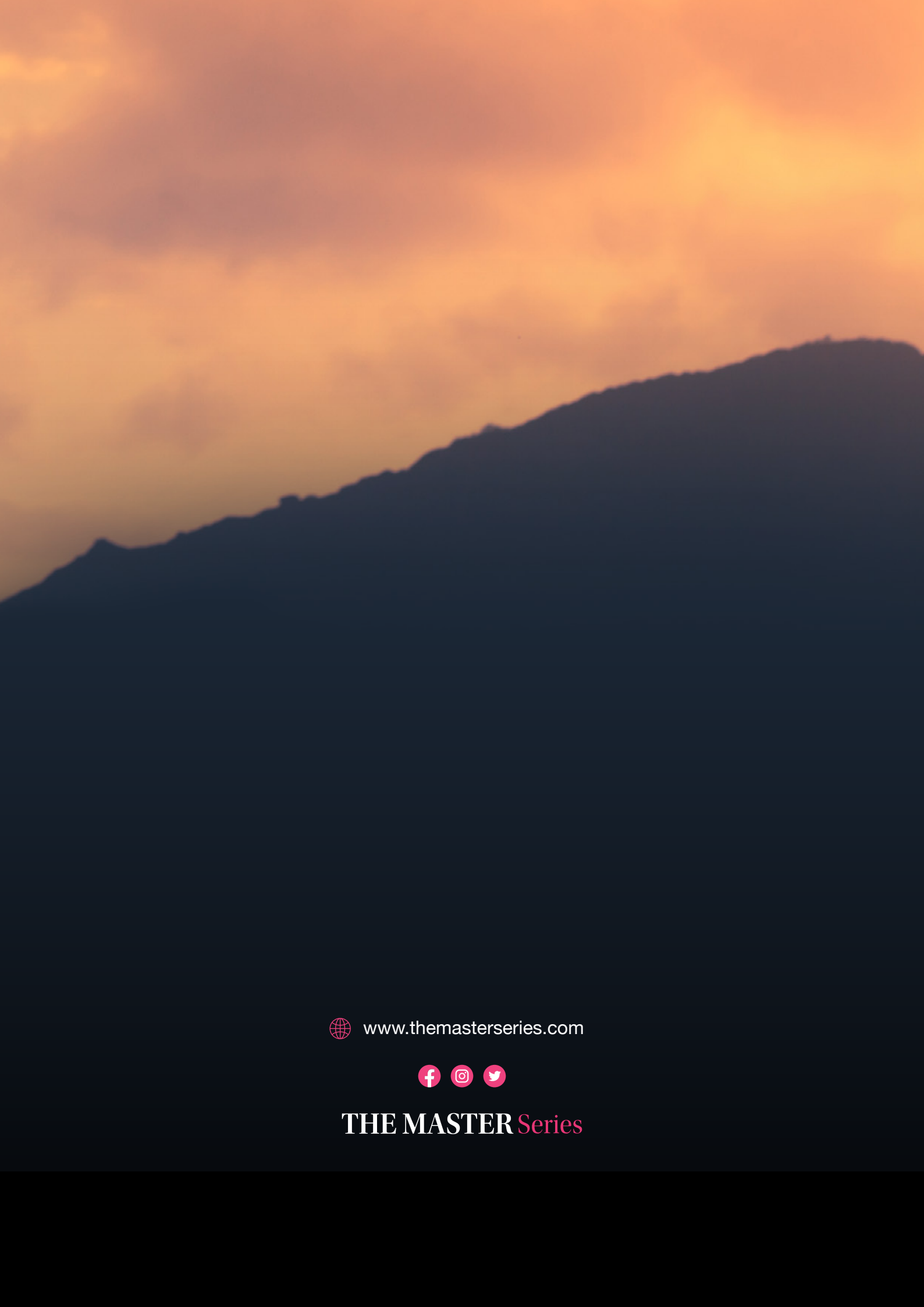


KEEPING YOUR IMMUNITY BOOSTED

While you may not always be able to prevent getting ill, a strong immune system is one way to provide your body with extra protection. Focus on a balanced diet, sufficient sleep, and stress management to help maintain a healthy immune system all year round.

Exercise is a fantastic way to manage stress and may help lower your risk of developing chronic conditions that could further impair your immune system. Using suitable and healthy stress-reduction techniques such as yoga and meditation can also help keep your immunity boosted.





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