

Recommendations to Balance Neurotransmitters

Organic Food:

- ✓ vegetables (especially asparagus, beets, bell peppers, broccoli, cabbage, chard, parsley, spinach, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes)
- ✓ fruits (especially avocados, bananas, citrus fruits, kiwi, and strawberries and other berries)
- ✓ whole grains (especially oats) and quinoa
- ✓ legumes (especially black beans and other beans, lentils, peas, and chickpeas)
- ✓ nuts (especially almonds, cashews, and walnuts; plus peanuts)
- ✓ seeds (especially chia seeds, flaxseeds, hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, and sesame seeds)
- ✓ cacao powder
- ✓ fermented foods like kimchi, sauerkraut, tempeh
- ✓ mushrooms
- ✓ soy products like tofu and tempeh
- ✓ spicy foods like chili peppers
- ✓ algae omega supplements
- ✓ foods fortified in B12, D and iron
- ✓ in general foods that are enjoyable or linked to comfort

Avoid:

- ✓ diets high in sugar, saturated fats, MSG, or artificial additives
- ✓ processed foods
- ✓ overeating
- ✓ social isolation
- ✓ caffeine
- ✓ high stress
- ✓ poor sleep

Adopt:

- ✓ getting enough sleep
- ✓ regular exposure to natural light
- ✓ mindfulness practices like meditation
- ✓ regular physical activity
- ✓ laughter
- ✓ volunteering
- ✓ physical touch (human and animals)
- ✓ social bonding
- ✓ acts of kindness
- ✓ stress management techniques
- ✓ mentally stimulating activities
- ✓ activities that you enjoy and find rewarding
- ✓ activities that give a sense of accomplishment
- ✓ maintaining good mental health practices

Varied Exercise Routine (30-60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity most days of the week):

- ✓ **aerobic** exercises like jogging or, running, cycling, and swimming
- ✓ **high-intensity** activities like sprinting, weight lifting, and HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training)
- ✓ **stress reducing** activities like yoga, tai chi, and Pilates
- ✓ **social** exercises like group classes, team sports, or partnered activities like dancing

Nature-Based Activities:

Spending time in sunlight: Exposure to sunlight increases vitamin D levels, which is linked to serotonin production.

Gardening: Engaging with nature and seeing the results of your efforts can increase dopamine levels. Engaging in strenuous gardening activities like digging can also release endorphins.

Community gardening: Working with others to nurture plants fosters a sense of community and bonding.

Hiking in nature: Exploring new trails provides a sense of achievement and discovery.

Walking in nature: Regular walks in green spaces can improve mood and increase serotonin levels.

Forest bathing (Shinrin-yoku): The practice of being in nature and taking in the forest atmosphere can promote relaxation and increase GABA levels.

Running or brisk walking in parks: Physical activity, especially in green spaces, can trigger endorphin release.

Adventure sports in nature: Activities like rock climbing or kayaking can increase alertness and norepinephrine levels.

Cycling or mountain biking: Vigorous exercise can elevate norepinephrine, improving focus and energy.

Cold water swimming: Exposure to cold water can boost norepinephrine.

Learning new outdoor skills: Activities like survival skills, orienteering, or birdwatching can stimulate the brain.

Foraging for wild foods: The anticipation and reward of finding food can boost dopamine.

Problem-solving games in outdoor settings: Participating in treasure hunts or geocaching can boost glutamate and improve learning capabilities.

Interactive nature trails: Engaging with educational content about the environment or participating in citizen science projects can enhance cognitive functions.

Meditation outdoors: Practices like yoga or meditation in natural settings can enhance inner peace and serotonin.

Sitting by a lake: Quiet, contemplative activities near water can help induce a meditative state that increases GABA.

Laughing and socializing outdoors: Group activities or sports can be fun and stimulate endorphin production.

Outdoor group fitness classes: Exercising together can build social connections and boost oxytocin.

Tai chi or Qi Gong in nature: These gentle exercises can calm the mind and reduce stress.

Pet walking or animal care: Interacting with animals can increase oxytocin levels.

source: globalstewards.org/brain-health.htm