**GROUNDWORK PROGRAMME – building the foundations of health.**

This programme was designed specifically to amalgamate all of the basic knowledge + education on curating a healthy groundwork for your body to spring from. It is packed with explanations on the whys of each element. You can find a simple overview of the programme on the final page under ‘summary’.

*INTRODUCTION – The gut is the basic root cause of many, if not all illnesses and imbalances. Beginning the re-balancing of any illness will ultimately require at least an element of gut-work: curating a solid foundation from which the rest of the body and its functions spring from. This protocol is designed firstly to bring the gut back to its natural equilibrium and secondly to optimise its natural detoxification pathways…*

*It is easy to think of ‘detoxing’ as an isolated, conscious effort on our part. It is not. It is an unsupported natural flow; a constant rhythm of our bodies that is often hindered by our lives. The conscious effort comes in us altering the way of life that slows the natural process. We do not so much actively ‘detox’, as ALLOW our body to detox itself.*

*Ultimately, the body is always trying to bring itself back to its natural equilibrium, hindered only by our actions/ inactions. Most often it needs us to step out of the way rather than interfere or add things, and so this protocol is designed to remove every possible obstacle and to provide the body with what it needs to heal itself.*

*This programme was born from and designed around the belief that gut health is simple and accessible information that should be common knowledge; therefore, the factor of most importance is accessibility. This programme is designed to re-educate and deliver foundational knowledge rather than to sell or convince of any ideas. Each step will be explained so that hopefully you have all you need to make tweaks, repeat and follow your own personal protocol. Body sovereignty.*

*The programme has been divided into 3 ‘elements’, this is purely to make the information more digestible and accessible. Each element is intended to be performed together for the 10 days. So, they are recommended all to be undertaken at the same time for the full 10 days. If the alterations in your life are too much or unsustainable [it is so important to set goals that are actually achievable for you] then feel free to take the elements separately and gradually build, for example; element 1 for 3 days, then element 1 and 2 for the following 3 days, then element 1, 2 and 3 for the following 4 days. Or gradually build up to a point where you can start the 10 days with all 3 elements together.*

**ELEMENT 1 – putting the breaks on.**

Through life we will learn that in order for something to change, we must first remove the thing that is preventing the desired change: allowing nature to take its natural flow. Crumbling walls and dissolving perceptions that keep us static in where we are.

This first element is a mirror of this; the intention to change and the action that follows. This is where we stop the momentum that holds us where we are, we put the breaks on. It is the initial commitment to the upcoming journey.

**What does putting the breaks on look like on the groundwork journey?**

* *Stopping the foods that our bodies find difficult.*

This is so that we can redirect all of the energy (yes, real metabolic energy, digestion is a calorie + time + vitamin consuming process) our body might be using for the extra effort of digesting + assimilating these difficult foods, into healing instead. We are essentially creating space. The ‘difficult’ foods that are identified in this specific protocol include;

-caffeine [ with the exception of green tea ]

-dairy

-eggs

-gluten and wheat

-sugar

-meat

-alcohol

Each of these foods have a heavy pattern of evidence across history and the collective of irritating the gut wall (meaning more time is spent in healing the irritated tissue than in healing the rest of the body), this is not a ‘bad’ thing, it is exactly what the body is designed to cope with in small doses, we are removing them to allow for the natural flow of re-balancing and healing to be directed to the rest of the body. We are removing ‘distractions’ so to speak.

These are by no means ‘bad’ foods, simply foods that are unnecessary and a hinderance to this particular process.

If you think it will be too difficult for you to eliminate all of these at once, take as long as you need to gradually eliminate them until you’re at a stage where you’re ready to start the 10 days without them.

* *Deep belly breathing + stretching + movement*

When we work with our bodies ability to move and breath each day, we approach the groundwork of health from a truly holistic perspective. This particular segment is about working WITH the natural process of our body, any sort of ‘detoxification’ programme is always based on a matter of supporting and improving efficiency of what the body always already does. Belly breathing, stretching and moving ultimately improves blood flow; where bloods flows, life follows.

* *Relaxation + reducing stress*

The final segment of ELEMENT 1 is the challenge of prioritising one simple relaxation method every day, to be continued throughout the 10 days. This could look like meditation, breathwork, art, yoga, taking a bath…anything that helps you to release. The chemicals that are released in the body during prolonged stress create inflammation. Inflammation is the primary root of disease and the ultimate foundation of health. Levels of chronic hidden inflammation impair the natural flow of many body functions. Reducing inflammation by creating an environment where the inflammation reduces itself is really the secret goal of this journey, and so finding one thing a day to consistently reduce stress [ thus inflammation] will be a beautiful and extraordinary benefit.

**ELEMENT 2 – releasing and moving on.**

After we have committed to change an element of life and we have begun to re-direct our life flow away from the old by ‘putting the breaks on’ as we have in ELEMENT 1, we find ourselves in a process of releasing and purging. Moving on and over the existence of our old realities in order to embrace the new.

In ELEMENT 2, there is a redirection of intention toward this removal process: deeply supporting our natural flow of detoxification and elimination processes.

**What does supporting detoxification and elimination look like?**

* *Intermittent fasting*

History, culture and science all stands on the side of the potent benefits of fasting for improved detoxification pathways and overall equilibrium of health. I will link a few articles below for those interested in exploring deeper.

- [What Happens To Your Body When You Skip Breakfast? - Organic Olivia » Organic Olivia](https://blog.organicolivia.com/what-happens-to-your-body-when-you-skip-breakfast/) [why this programme calls for overnight fasting, i.e., eating an earlier dinner, as opposed to daytime fasting]

- [An Intro to Fasting | Dr. Mark Hyman (drhyman.com)](https://drhyman.com/blog/2019/04/16/an-intro-to-fasting/) [a little bit more of the science]

Ultimately, intermittent fasting allows the body to direct its resources toward resting and ‘healing’ between periods of energy and time consuming eating. Fasting is a way of stepping out of the way of the bodies natural inclinations to heal, simply removing the dam to allow the river to flow. Pronounced benefits are felt at 14-16hrs of overnight fasting and this is what is required on this journey. If you feel like going for longer, try it! A full day fast is a beautiful bonus but certainly not a necessity.

A daily dedication to 14-16+ hour fast overnight (fasting overnight is the bodies natural inclination, we do most of our recovering + repairing in our sleep) is the first segment of ELEMENT 2

Another very important part of this element is ELIMINATION. Since we are focusing on the removal of the old, we need to physically release this from the body through passing stools at least once a day. It is important this happens. An additional elimination pathway (to the gut and liver) happens through the skin; sweating is a hugely beneficial process for the body as the skin is the largest elimination organ. Induce a sweat everyday, preferably through exercise, but hot baths, saunas, wrapping up tight etc… are all fine, just sweat!

Other important parts of ELEMENT 2 are as follows. Each part plays an important role in supporting the natural elimination + detoxification pathways;

* *Increasing fibre*

There are two types of fibre; Insoluble fibre (cruciferous vegetables, legumes, beans, berries, flax, avocado, coconut, nuts..) that cradles all of our metabolic waste products and removes them effectively, like a ball of glue, and Soluble fibre which draws water into the gut to soften the stools and nourish the bacterial microbiome.

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***-side note: why do we want a nourished bacterial microbiome?***  *The ratio of beneficial to non-beneficial bacteria colonising our gut has been proven timelessly to be the cascade of many of our biological + metabolic processes including vitamin formation, metabolism, detoxification and hormone responses. We are actually more bacteria than we are human body… Hence tending to our inner garden of bacteria is a foundational step to changing how we function as a human. Here’s a more detailed article on gut bacteria :* [How to Feed Your Gut | Dr. Mark Hyman (drhyman.com)](https://drhyman.com/blog/2018/04/13/how-to-feed-your-gut/)

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* *Increasing leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables*

Both leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables support phase 2 of the natural liver detoxification process in numerous unique ways. Phase 2 of liver detoxification is perhaps the most important to be functioning well as this is where the ‘harmful’ waste metabolic substances are made less damaging to the body. Other things that specifically support this phase include apples and carrots!

* *Tasting bitter*

The bitter taste on the tongue creates a cascade of biochemical reactions in the digestive system until the liver is stimulated to increase bile production and digestion and detoxification is then improved. Ways you can taste bitter include chewing on fresh dandelion leaves from the garden, grapefruit, citrus fruit pith, green tea or a specially crafted bitter tonic available in abundance on etsy.

* *Drinking green tea*

Green tea not only benefits the bacterial microbiome but contains many compounds that support the liver in all stages of its detoxification + elimination process.

* *Optional (less accessible) extras:*
1. *Chlorella powder*

Chlorella contains an abundance of vitamins and minerals to support the body in performing basic metabolic processes. It also has unique compounds that bind to heavy metals.

1. *Activated charcoal powder*

Charcoal has the unique property of binding to excess metabolic waste.

**ELEMENT 3 – building upward from a solid ground**

When we find ourselves at a clean and open stage of life, where the old has passed through and there is an empty fertile terrain left over, we have the opportunity to rebuild. From this terrain, we can start again; this is the focus of ELEMENT 3.

ELEMENT 3 asks for the addition of healing and rebuilding supplements. This is the stage where the cost goes up and the accessibility goes down; a mirror of the investment into a new life. However this programme was designed to hold friendly and accessible options. ELEMENT 3 has been divided into two options; *the functional and the optimal level*. The functional level is the most accessible and will still be of huge benefit. The optimal level is the more costly and more impactful. Whichever route you choose, the benefits will certainly be felt. It is also possible to choose your own combinations from below, based on the accessibility to you. Noting that if you choose marshmallow root, the plantain tea is unnecessary as they are both very similar.

* *The functional level – take all herbs listed below*

Hand-picked stinging nettle tea is the core component to this level. If you cannot hand pick the stinging nettles, dried nettle leaf is also an affordable and accessible option. Nettle is a highly nutritive and powerful inflammation modulating herb. It has potent benefits on the levels of inflammation in the gut and provides the body with many of the nutrients needed to function optimally. 1 tbspn of dried herb, twice a day, or a handful of the fresh herb a day is recommended. Simmer these on the stove for 20mins to 1 hour.

Turmeric powder heated with black pepper is the other herb at this level of accessibility. Very well known for its inflammation modulation, the addition of this will greatly benefit the terrain of the gut. 1 tspn of the powder heated with black pepper each day is recommended. Black pepper makes the beneficial compounds of turmeric more bio-available for our bodies and is a powerful herb in aiding detoxification in its own right.

Plantain leaf is the final component of this level. To find the fresh herb it is recommended to find an accurate field guide online or in text, or a trusted herbalist. They are absolutely everywhere, like dandelion leaves and super easy to find. Alternatively, the dried herb is as accessible and affordable as nettle. Plantain has a moistening, soothing quality and will work to ‘fix’ any damage in the cells of the gut wall as well as being a prebiotic food for the beneficial bacteria. Take as the nettle, why not take both in a tea at the same time?

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***Side note: What does it mean to fix the damage in the cell walls of the gut?*** *There are many things beyond our control in our contemporary lifestyles that irritate the cells of the gut wall; stress, foods on the ELEMENT 1 list, environmental chemicals from soil and water etc.. a long term impact of such continuous irritation leads to small holes in the gut wall. This is referred to as increased intestinal permeability, meaning whatever you ingest that is broken down in the gut, can now leak out directly into the blood stream of the body before it is made ‘safe’ by processes further down in digestion. This leads to subclinical (unobservable) inflammation and immune reactions as your body perceives an issue. This programme aims to help the process of healing the gut wall, although it is quite an intensive and committed process and to complete it most efficiently + effectively, it is recommended to contact a practitioner.*

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* *The optimal level*

Oat straw is a hugely beneficial herb to the gut for many reasons. This one is a wonderful investment. Oat straw modulates the bacteria in the gut, regulates stress responses and heals the gut wall. Take a handful in an overnight infusion, made by pouring hot water over the dried herb and leaving overnight.

Marshmallow root is the second element of the optimal level. Marshmallow root holds a softening and healing quality and will work to heal any damage in the gut wall therefore reducing inflammation. It works similarly to plantain. Marshmallow root is best simmered in hot water for 3hrs, the resulting water then being drunk; try a preparation from 2tbspns of the root a day.

A good quality, organic mineral and vitamin supplementation is perhaps the most fundamental of these options. I tend to recommend a good basic supplement to most people as a basis. Vitamins and minerals are the basis of all of our body’s reactions and processes, when we provide our body with enough bioavailable forms of these, it is easy for it to perform its natural processes such as; detoxification. It is easy to believe that if you are eating an abundance of fruit and vegetables daily that you are providing your body with all the vitamins and minerals it needs, but our soil is so degraded and our daily lives so depleting that this just is not true for the majority of us, no matter how well intentioned. Supplementing is an act of love in a world that doesn’t completely support us.

[MultiVit Vitamin Oral Spray | BetterYou](https://betteryou.com/collections/multivitamins/products/multivit-oral-spray) here is a really affordable option.

No matter which path you choose here (and don’t be afraid to combine paths, picking and choosing as however works for you), one factor that will be hugely beneficial to include is adding fermented and naturally prebiotic foods daily. This will encourage the gut to be re-populated with beneficial bacteria, stabilising the terrain. Examples of prebiotic and fermented foods;

-saurkraut

-cruciferous vegetables

-leafy greens

-carrots

-apples [[Why Apples Are an Overlooked Liver Detox Superfood - Organic Olivia » Organic Olivia](https://blog.organicolivia.com/why-apples-are-an-overlooked-liver-detox-superfood/) interesting article about other incredible benefits of an apple a day]

-miso

-kimchi

-bananas

-beans (always soak beans and nuts to make them bioavailable + easy to digest for the body!)

-coconuts

**TO SUM**

*ELEMENT 1 :*

-Remove the following;

-caffeine [ with the exception of green tea ]

-dairy

-eggs

-gluten and wheat

-sugar

-meat

-alcohol

-10 deep belly breaths and regular intervals of movement + stretching every day

- Dedication to an activity you find to be stress reducing

*ELEMENT 2 :*

* 14-16hrs of intermittent overnight fasting everyday (do not skip breakfast!)
* Increasing dietary fibre
* Tasting bitter on the tongue
* Drinking green tea (matcha is even better) (don’t worry if you don’t like green tea, though extremely beneficial, this bit can be skipped )
* Optional, less accessible extras include chlorella or activated charcoal powder.

*ELEMENT 3 :*

* Choosing to supplement either with plantain leaf tea, nettle leaf tea and turmeric heated with black pepper or oat-straw infusion, marshmallow root tea and a vitamin- mineral supplement. Or choosing your own combinations of the above based on accessibility to you. Noting that if you choose marshmallow root then you can omit plantain tea since they have very similar actions.

-Adding prebiotic + fermented foods to the diet which looks like;

-saurkraut

-cruciferous vegetables

-leafy greens

-carrots

-apples [[Why Apples Are an Overlooked Liver Detox Superfood - Organic Olivia » Organic Olivia](https://blog.organicolivia.com/why-apples-are-an-overlooked-liver-detox-superfood/) interesting article about other incredible benefits of an apple a day]

-miso

-kimchi

-bananas

-beans (always soak beans and nuts to make them bioavailable + easy to digest for the body!)

-coconuts

**And finally, this programme can actually be continued safely and effectively as a long term, life-long and flexible commitment. If you are considering this and would like advice for alterations and additions contact me on** **apothecaryofbeare@gmail.com**