

Plant  Trainers

**9 EASY  
WAYS  
TO RELIEVE  
YOUR  
DIGESTIVE  
DISTRESS**

by Shoshana Chaim



IBS, Gerd, Acid Reflux, Constipation, Diarrhea, leaky gut and diseases affecting the colon and gastrointestinal tract...a simple search on Google and you'll get an average of 50 million hits for each of these digestive issues. What does that tell us? It tells us people are suffering. And chances are if you're here, reading this, you're suffering too.

Over the years we've talked with and coached individuals who get severe heartburn, have to leave the house with a change of clothes as they dirty themselves, feel 6 months pregnant from bloating (men and women included), can't poop, poop too much and the list goes on. More often than not, they have been to their doctor, been scheduled for unpleasant investigative procedures or have been prescribed medication. And often this does not put an end to the problem or it creates a series of other issues.

Thousands of people are being medicated for digestive issues with strong over the counter or prescription medications. What worries us, is that these medications have side effects like constipation, diarrhea, gas, bloody stools, headaches and that's just skimming the top (and ironically some of those side effects are what you are trying to treat in the first place!).

If we could teach you some tools the help soothe these digestive issues would you be willing to give them a go? GOOD! Then keep reading!

Some of these simple changes are going to seem evident, but really be true to yourself and see if you are following them to the "T" on most days. Others may be new for you and seem impossible to follow. We're not telling you to apply all of these by the time you turn your device off. Start with one or two that speak to you. Maybe one or two that seem easy to start with. Or perhaps a few get you thinking about your lifestyle. So maybe you can start there.



A stylized, light gray graphic of a human digestive system, including the esophagus, stomach, small intestine, and large intestine, is overlaid on a white background with scattered light gray dots. The text is centered over this graphic.

**HERE WE GO WITH  
9 SIMPLE  
CHANGES  
YOU CAN MAKE  
TO HELP WITH  
YOUR DIGESTIVE  
ISSUES**



# DRINK MORE WATER

OK, now that we all just took a sip together, it's time to make sure you keep this up throughout the day. Water keeps everything in the body moving and fluid. It helps with the breakdown of food particles and digestion. Lemon and water is great first thing in the morning it will trigger the stomach to wake up and do its job.

## Not sure how to drink more?

We suggest starting your day off with 2 cups of water before you eat or drink anything else. It's a great way to rehydrate your body after a warm, cozy sleep. Set a simple chime on your phone to remind you to drink from your water bottle or get up and go to the sink. And finally, train yourself to drink water on your commute. It will also keep you from eating all kinds of snacks that are surely not helping this digestive nightmare you are in.



# CHEW PEOPLE, CHEW!

It sounds simple but chewing your food properly allows an enzyme called salivary amylase to begin to break down foods and begin the digestive process properly. We know that's a mouth full, but this is where it should start, in the mouth.

Mindful eating is sweeping the nation. But mindful chewing must not be forgotten. When you eat in front of the TV, when you are famished, or as you are running out the door, it's like your swallowing the food like a whale (sorry, we don't mean to call you names, we do it sometimes too!) Sit and enjoy the food your eating. Have a conversation while you eat so you have to take a moment to look up from your plate and chew while you listen. Maybe you can put your fork down in between each bite...we swear we tried this in high school, it's been around that long. But most of all, just set an intention before you eat to respect the food, respect yourself and chew slowly to aid your body.



## FIBRE

You've heard this before. Fibrous foods can help protect against obesity, heart disease and may even help you with your digestive issues. Fibre feeds the intestinal cells with good bacteria, especially if it's a whole food organic source of fibre (brown rice, a kale salad, beans or an apple, to name a few). Fibre absorbs toxins, bile, and cholesterol, as well as keeps the contents of the digestive tract moving in conjunction with water. Water is key as fibre without water generally makes for a bad intestinal situation.

### Not sure how to add more fibre?

If you want to up your fibre, try adding colourful veggies to your lunch. You can also replace a store bought granola bar or fibre bar that you normally eat for a snack with real whole fruit or veggies. Add beans to your soup or salads, eat lots of fruit, and remember that dehydrated fibre (like some dried fruits or crackers) can actually back you up and add to the digestive issues because of the lack of water content in the food.



## THYME TO GET SAGE ADVICE

Adding bitter herbs to your diet can stimulate acid production. Why would you want to do that you ask? The reason why you want to stimulate more acid production is because you want more HCL. It's responsible for breaking down your vitamins and minerals, making them bioavailable, or you can say it gives it the best chance of being absorbed by the body. If you don't have sufficient HCL, food will not break down properly and foods will begin to ferment in the body. This is not good the good kind of fermentation and we'll address that next. It can increase the 'bad' bacteria which result in an array of issues like IBS, leaky gut or Crohn's disease and acid reflux.

### Need Herb ideas?

Cinnamon, ginger, dandelion and other bitter greens such as arugula are a great place to start and you can find them in your regular grocery store. And if you're a minty type person try peppermint oil capsules or fresh peppermint leaves!



# EAT FERMENTED FOODS

That's right. Foods that have been fermented can act as probiotics in the body, so there may not be such a need for fancy expensive probiotics in capsule form. We are not telling you to stop taking one if you do, we are just educating you here! And unfortunately, wine does not count in this particular instance (#sorry). Eating foods that contain probiotics can help feed the good bacteria in your gut or stomach. We want to try to keep the good bacteria more plentiful than the bad, so feeding that good bacteria with fermented foods is favorable.

## Not sure what to do now?

### Try incorporating at least one of the following most days:

- **Miso** is a fermented soy product. It can be used in salad dressings, sauces or spreads.
- **Tempeh** is fermented soybeans. It can be dry fried or baked to make a nice sandwich filling or even marinated and baked with a sauce with a side of crisp veggies.
- **Sauerkraut** is fermented cabbage. You want to make sure it's actually fermented. If there is vinegar in the ingredients, it's not fermented. You can add sauerkraut to sandwiches, burgers, bowls, and salads.
- **Kombucha** is a fermented tea found in the drink section of most health food stores. They make a delicious caffeinated drink, but they are a bit bubbly and they can be loaded with sugar. So choose wisely.

"Unfortunately, wine does not count in this particular instance (#sorry)"



## WATCH THE CLOCK

If you are not on shift work and find yourself crawling into bed around 10 or 11 o'clock try not to eat dinner after 8 PM. This can often affect your ability to sleep. The body needs to exert quite a bit of energy for a while after eating in order to digest the food. This may make your body restless without you even knowing it. In addition, meat products take longer than any other food to digest so if you want to be better setup for a good night's sleep try making sure dinner is plant-based if it isn't already. When you get a good night's rest, your body will be calmer, more energetic and more likely to be ready to manage the digestive process.



## DON'T EAT & DON'T STRESS

What??? Well, we're not telling you not to eat, we're telling you to be mindful of when you do. Try to avoid eating when stressed, rushed or upset. When you are stressed you release cortisol (a hormone) which can keep your digestion from working properly. Try to find a time when you're not rushing or stressed to eat in a relaxed manner.

### Here are a few tips to use when trying to eat when your body is more relaxed:

- Take a few big breaths before you eat. Use an app to meditate for even five minutes, find a guided meditation online, or simply sit and breathe thinking about everything in life you are grateful for and why.
- Give your body a chance to calm down. The other thing you may try is planning your meals and scheduling the time to eat it. Knowing what you're going to eat will keep you from rushing and stressing over what to eat. Knowing when to eat it will help you from waiting so long to eat that you feel like devouring the whole refrigerator.
- And finally, if you know certain things are stressful in your life, see what you can do to reduce that stress. That may look like hiring help, decluttering things or negative people, or even just taking more control of planning so you don't feel like a loose cannon all the time.



# ELIMINATE

This is probably the part that you were least looking forward to. But you already know that there are certain foods that you are consuming that may be causing stress on your body, GI tract and creating a huge amount of discomfort, pain and even long term damage. For most people this part can be individual. Listening to your body to see which foods are causing you immediate distress can definitely help.

There may be more items to eliminate either long term or temporarily.

But we will go through our

**BIG FIVE** together.





## Avoid Alcohol

For some, this may sound like the end of the world, but ask yourself how much pain and suffering you are in. Alcohol can impair the function of the muscles separating the esophagus from the stomach, thereby favoring the occurrence of heartburn. Commit to 30, 60 or even 90 days without booze and give your body a change to adjust. Not willing to go 100% dry? Try going light on the bottle and seeing how different drinks affect your belly. Liquor, beer and wine may react differently in your body. Alcohol may impair the muscle movement in the small and large intestines, contributing to the diarrhea frequently observed in alcoholics. Moreover, alcohol inhibits the absorption of nutrients in the small intestine and increases the transport of toxins across the intestinal walls. It may also contribute to the development of alcohol-related damage to the liver and other organs.



## Monitor Sugar Intake

Sugar can be your worst enemy. But many whole foods contain natural sugar. So don't go too overboard. Start by eliminating foods that have processed sugars in them. That will also help you as they will also eliminate other ingredients (think donuts, with tons of sugar, deep fried with crazy toppings or cookies and ice cream with tons of saturated fats. Trust me, we are doing you a favour here!). Now that we have cleaned out the obviously sugary snacks, think about where you are adding sugar to your food. Start to train yourself to drink your coffee or tea black or with some almond milk if you must (and see the notes below). If you are buying prepared foods, try to find ones with less sugar. You'd be surprised how much sugar goes into prepared, sauces, soups, chillies and dressings to keep you coming back for more. Now, fruit is the tricky one and it's going to be up to you to feel your body's reaction. Try to stick to some of the lower glycemic fruits for now IF they sit well with you. So welcome in berries, cherries, apples, pears, nectarines, peaches to name a few. But if you get bloating, try once more and then stay away from that for the time being.



## Avoid Dairy

Dairy and milk products contain lactose, which is often not well digested by children and adults. It is extremely inflammatory and can create huge havoc on your body. I know, I know...You can't live without your cheese and yogurt. But let me ask you, if you're here, reading this, how comfortable are you living your life right now? What if you tried...just tried....15 days dairy-free, saw it was not that bad and tried another 15? That's right 30 days of giving your system a break of a food filled with the animal's natural hormones as well as puss and blood that are cleaned from the milk before being sent to stores. And high intake of dairy can increase the risk of prostate cancer and possibly ovarian cancer.

If you must have your dairy fix, there are a number of great non-dairy creamers out there, a plethora of nut and seed milks as well as beautiful hand crafted artisan cheeses. If you look, it will come!



## Chuck The Caffeine

Caffeinated coffee is known to increase gastric acid secretion. Although caffeine does not affect everyone with belly issues the same way, some of the biggest culprits are coffee, caffeinated tea, dark chocolate, energy drinks and over the counter painkillers. The best way to deal with this is to limit your daily caffeine intake to 400 mg.

If you MUST have your morning cup of joe, see how you feel afterwards and even try a day or two without any coffee too. Let your body be your guide. And whenever possible, opt for organic as it may contain less harsh chemicals. If it's the deep dark flavour you miss, look for coffee alternatives made from dandelion in your health food store. Try drinking caffeine free tea or tisane.



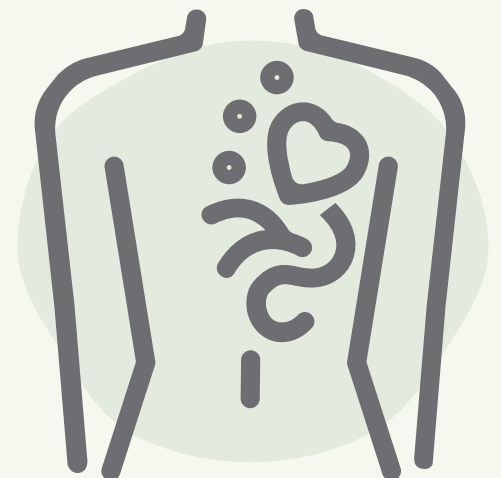
## Soft Drinks

As you have noticed, certain beverages are going to irritate your already sensitive stomach. Many soft drinks are filled with sugar. We have already covered that part above. You drink sugar free...ok, so let's take a look at that ingredient list. Are you sure you want to be replacing real sugar with fake sugar? When you use all those sugar replacements, your brain says "yay..sugar! Energy time" but about 20-30 minutes later it realizes you haven't actually consumed any sugar and it begins to crave it. And this leads to drinking more soda or overeating. Ouch! The bubbles in soda are not going to help your cause either...and if you look back to #1 you need to be drinking more water anyway. So ditch the soft drinks. It's done!



## LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Some people with digestive issues are unable to easily process foods like broccoli, beans, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, corn and wheat. We are not telling you to avoid these all together. We're saying be mindful. See how your body reacts to each of these foods. Maybe corn on the cob is ok but corn muffins hurt you. Maybe sprouted wheat bread sits nicely, but shelf stable whole wheat bread makes you buckle in pain. Choose wisely young planti-won. Eat the amount you can digest well and as your body begins to heal start to increase the quantity of these foods, if it's manageable. As you follow some of the other tips above, you may actually get to the point where you can enjoy some braised cauliflower with tahini sauce again (Yummmmmmmmy).



# NOW IS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH...

Are you ready to hear it? How many of these tips that you read today have you really given a chance for 30 days or longer? How many of them have you tried together? We know it sounds like a lot and 30 days without alcohol or caffeine seems like no life at all, but the truth is, at the end of the day, you need a change. And for many of you the combination of these tips or others may look different, because remember, everybody is different!

As you sit on your chair, looking at the screen, reading these words, you know that you need to make a change. Perhaps you need some help figuring out how all this is going to work. Or maybe you are gung-ho and going to start today.

## What we do know is that you have 3 choices.

1. Try one or two things you learnt today.
2. Decide that today you are embracing the sign from the universe and following this guide.
3. You need help because this is just too overwhelming but it needs to change now. We get you. Shoot us an **email** ([Shoshana@planttrainers.com](mailto:Shoshana@planttrainers.com)) and we will be here to listen. Whatever you chose, we are here with you, and proud of you and applaud you on your journey.



**Shoshana Chaim** is an author, TV guest and sought out international speaker who has been in the health and fitness field for well over a decade. As co-host of The Plant Trainers Podcast and a Health and Wellness Coach, she is working hard at helping individuals and families to alleviate the stress in life caused by diet, unhealthy lifestyle and chronic illness. Everything Shoshana and the Plant Trainers team has to offer can be found at [www.plantrainers.com](http://www.plantrainers.com)

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