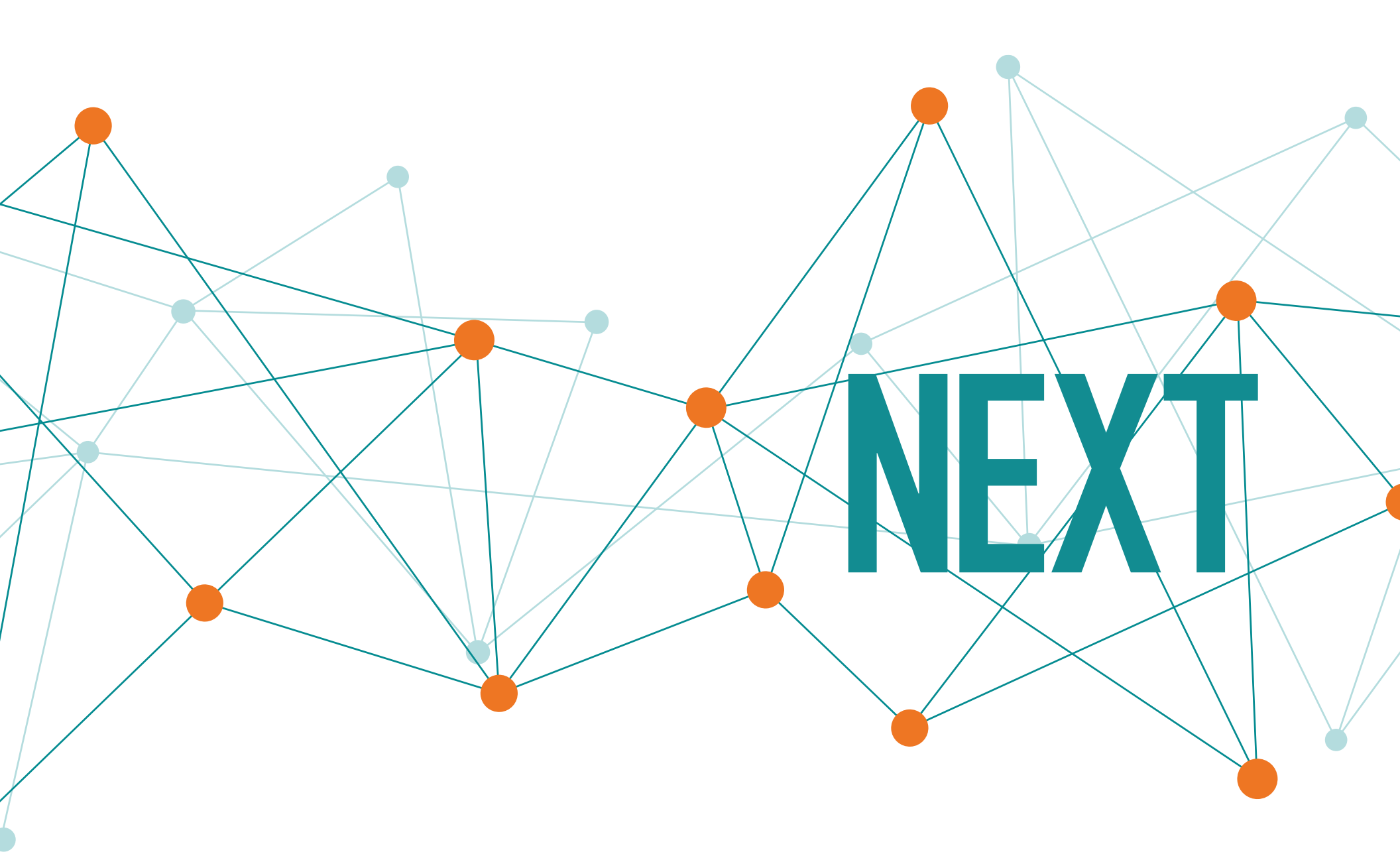
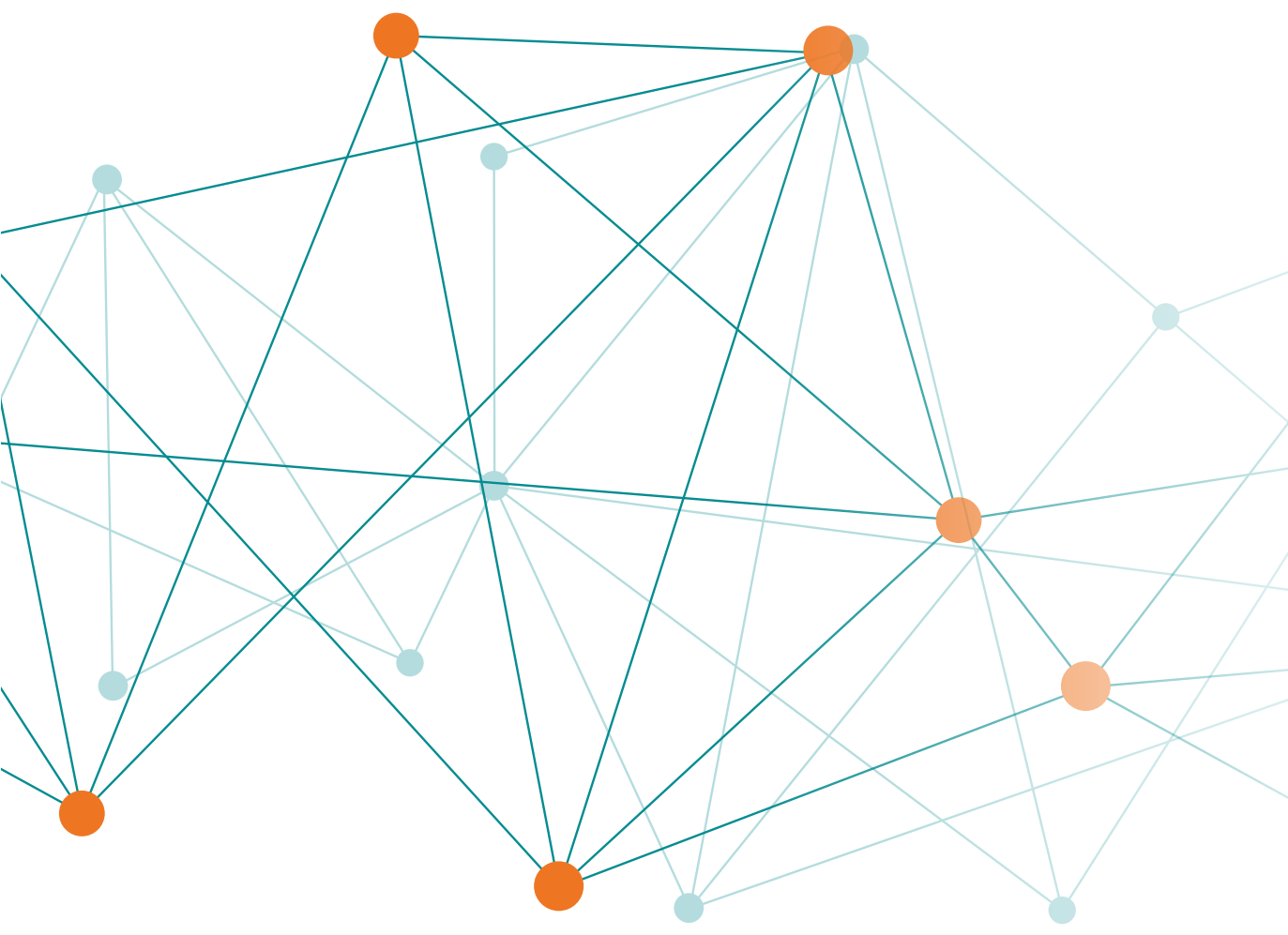




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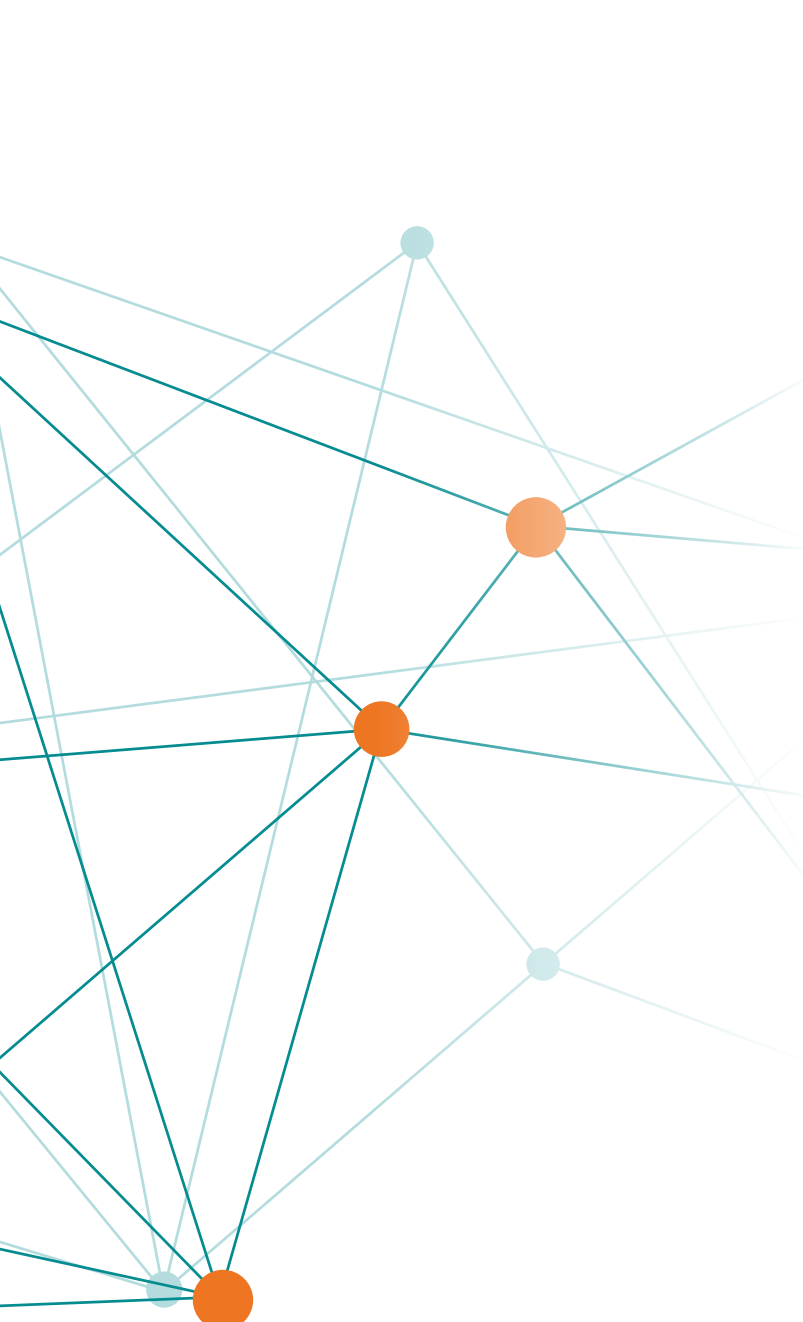
NEXT PRACTICES TO LIVE, WORK, AND AGE WELL • VOL. III





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# STEP INTO THE WORLD OF TOMORROW, TODAY.

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We collect emerging trends from around the world that make an impact on how we live, work, and age well. Dive into insights about health and wellness, sustainability and climate, technology and innovation, and lifestyle.

## HERE'S WHAT'S *NEXT*.



**LONGEVITY**

# A HEALTHIER HOME: ENVIRONMENTAL BIOHACKING

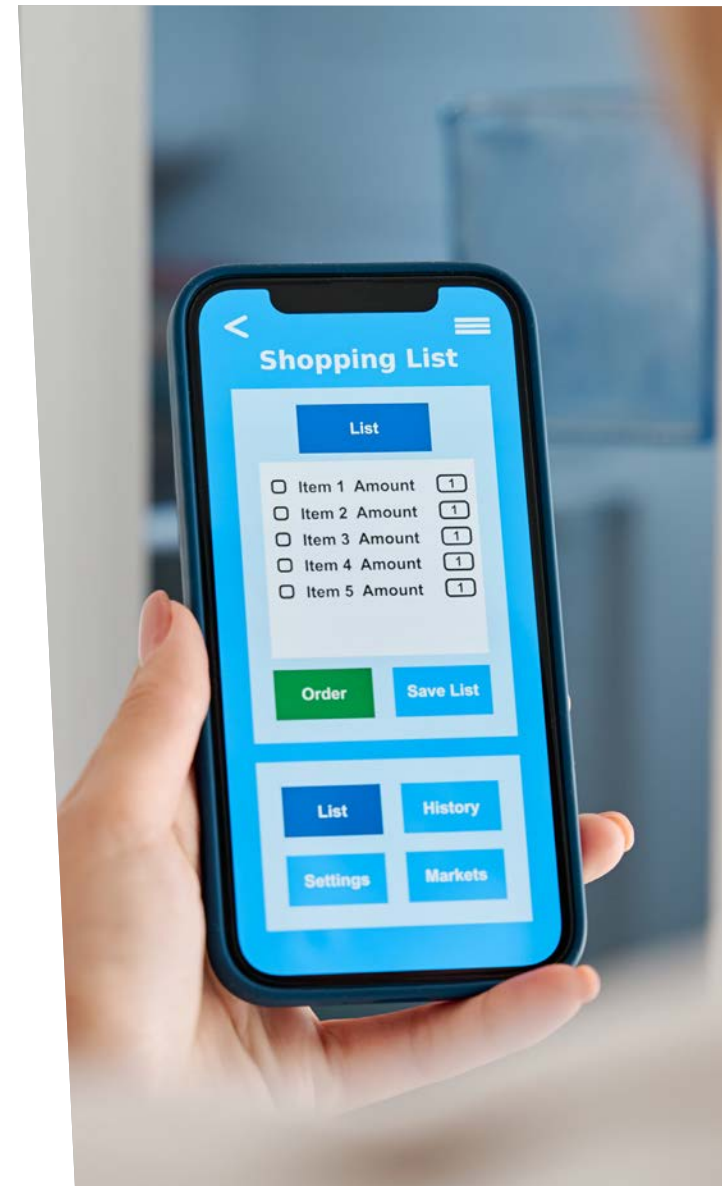
You might have a life hack that you use all the time to make your life a little easier, but what about hacks that can improve your environment? Enter biohacking. Biohacks involve small changes that can improve your physical and mental well-being. A new trend called environmental biohacking focuses on reducing exposure to harmful substances and optimizing your living environment through data-driven changes that support your health. Your home is an ideal place to start.

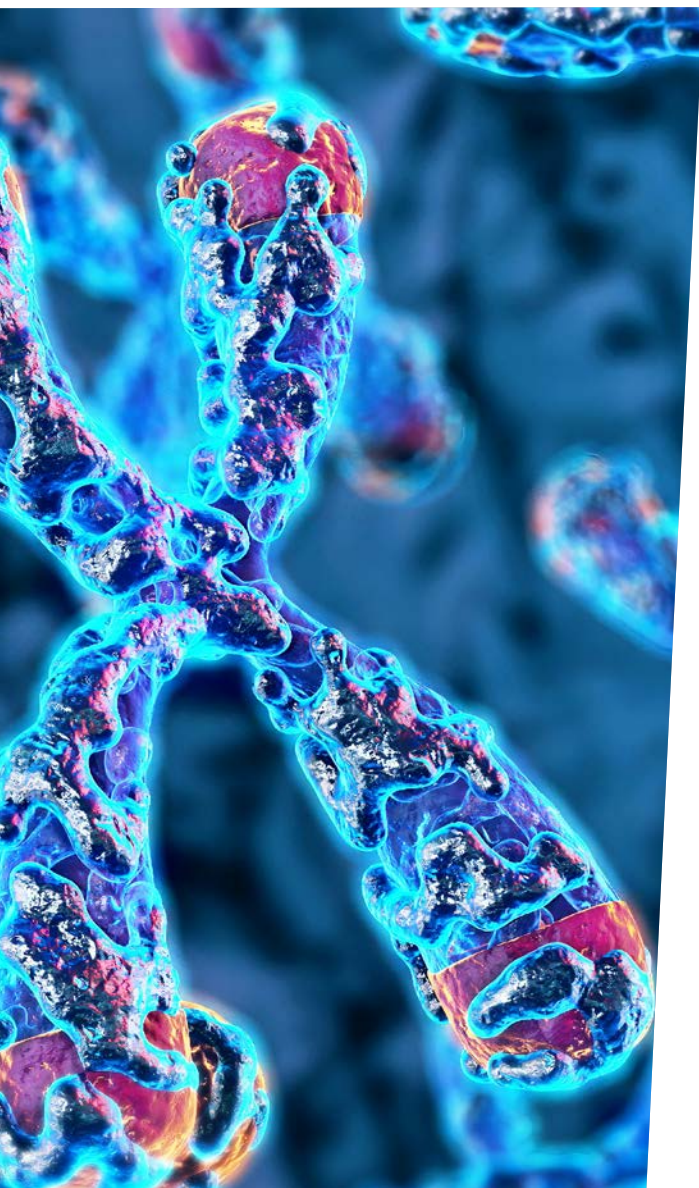
Biohacking your home can be done in many high- and low-tech ways. For example, simple solutions to promote sleep health in your home include using blackout curtains, investing in a high-quality mattress, and trying aromatherapy to create a greater sense of calm before bed. On the higher tech end of the spectrum, you could install a circadian lighting system to automatically adjust the

color and intensity of light depending on the time of day and room of the house.

This trend isn't just for sleep—every room in your house can be biohacked. In the kitchen, create an environment that makes healthy eating easier by stocking up on healthy foods, prioritizing nutrient-dense foods, and using a water filter to eliminate harmful contaminants. Examine your appliances. A smart refrigerator, for example, can use cameras or sensors to monitor food items, manage their inventory, and track expiration dates, ensuring healthy, fresh food is always on hand. Additionally, some use AI to sync with apps to personalize shopping and eating habits.

From sleep to eating habits and so much more, biohacking your home life can improve your well-being with a small number of changes.





## TELOMERE TALK: TYING THE DNA SHOELACE TO AGING WELL

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At the end of our chromosomes, there are stretches of DNA called telomeres. Often compared to a shoelace cap, telomeres protect our genetic information and make cell division possible—and can possibly hold the secret to how we age.

When cells divide, the telomeres shorten. When they become too short, cells can no longer divide and function properly, and tissues age. In some studies, the length of a telomere has been shown to be associated with overall health and lifespan. This is why researchers are studying telomeres; they are looking to understand cellular aging, the development of age-related diseases, and even cancer. By understanding how telomeres function, how they are maintained, and how they are affected by various factors like stress, diet, and lifestyle, researchers can develop strategies involving

telomeres to promote healthy aging and treat diseases.

However, the answer for a longer life does not mean simply lengthening telomeres, as research has shown this is ineffective and can lead to cancer. Instead, the focus should be on maintaining the health and length of telomeres. Some studies suggest that certain antioxidants, vitamins, and specific foods like nuts, blueberries, and green tea have been linked to longer telomeres and better health.

For those seeking to translate current research into practice, a holistic approach to telomere health—eating a balanced diet, regular exercise, stress management, and adequate sleep—is likely to be the most effective strategy for promoting longevity and overall well-being.

# THE ADAPTOGEN ADVANTAGE: ENHANCING WELL-BEING NATURALLY

It is well known that keeping stress low is a key to leading a happy and healthy life, but doing so is not as simple as being mindful of it. Stress can affect every part of a person's well-being: physical, mental, and emotional. That's why consumers are turning to natural remedies, known as adaptogens, in hopes of helping to lower their body's response to stress.

Adaptogens are plants, herbs, roots, and mushrooms believed to neutralize the effects of stress on the body, as well as help us manage stressful situations and restore balance. They work by influencing your hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, which regulates your body's stress response and plays a major role in keeping your body in balance.

You can take adaptogens as herbal supplements in capsule form, drink them in teas, or consume them in a powder added

to soups, smoothies, and other foods. If you are looking to enhance the effectiveness of these plants and herbs, certain botanicals and nutrients have been shown to boost the effects.

Beyond stress relief, adaptogens have been shown to aid with anxiety, tiredness, and concentration problems. Some examples of popular adaptogens include:

- **Ashwagandha:** shown to help reduce anxiety and depression
- **Ginseng:** refers to either American or Asian ginseng, and is used to combat fatigue
- **Schisandra:** aids improved concentration, coordination, and endurance
- **Tulsi ("holy basil"):** used to increase focus, decrease anxiety, and boost the immune system





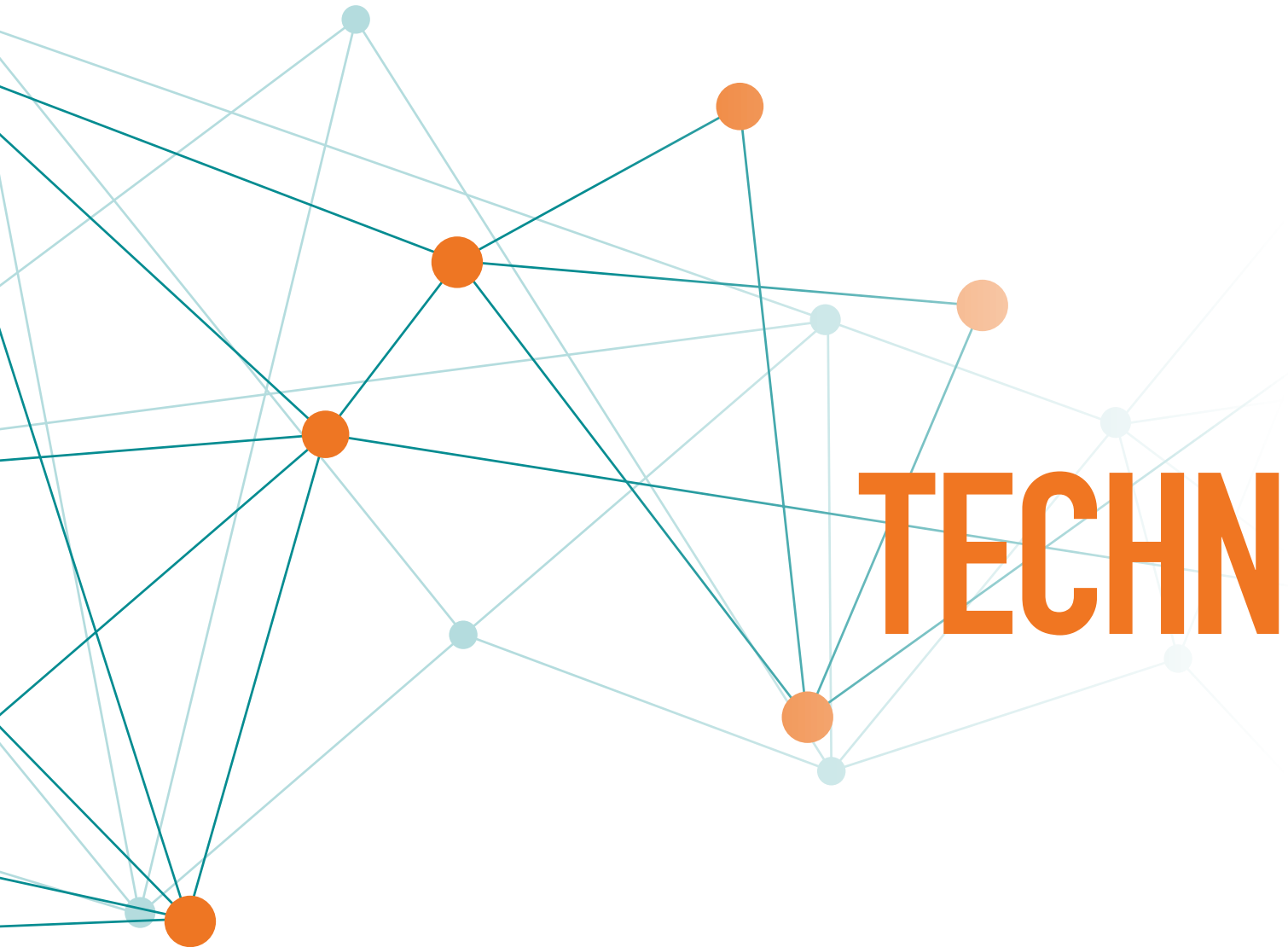
## TRY AN ADAPTOGEN STRESS-REDUCING SMOOTHIE

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup spinach leaves
- 1/2 ripe avocado
- 1/2 cup mixed berries (such as strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)
- 1 small banana
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds or flaxseeds
- 1 teaspoon matcha powder (optional)
- 1 teaspoon ashwagandha powder (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk or coconut water
- A handful of stress-reducing mushrooms (such as reishi or lion's mane), either fresh or powdered form

Place ingredients in a blender and puree. Add liquid (juice, almond milk, etc.) to achieve the thickness you want for your smoothie.

*Source: <https://www.surreycentrefornutrition.com/recipes/stress-busting-smoothie>*



**TECHNOLOGY**



# FACIAL CUES, HEART RATES & VOICE ANALYSIS: AI GETS EMOTIONAL

Emotional artificial intelligence (AI) is a rapidly growing field, involving systems that can recognize, understand, and react to human emotions. Combining computer science, psychology, neuroscience, and cognitive science, this type of AI uses models capable of understanding and simulating human emotional states. Emotional AI may sense facial expressions from a webcam or use voice analysis to detect tone, pitch, and speech patterns that suggest various emotional states. Other models can monitor physiological indicators such as heart rate, skin conductance, and brain activity to infer an individual's emotions.

After identifying a user's emotional state, emotional AI can be designed to respond appropriately, as in the following applications:

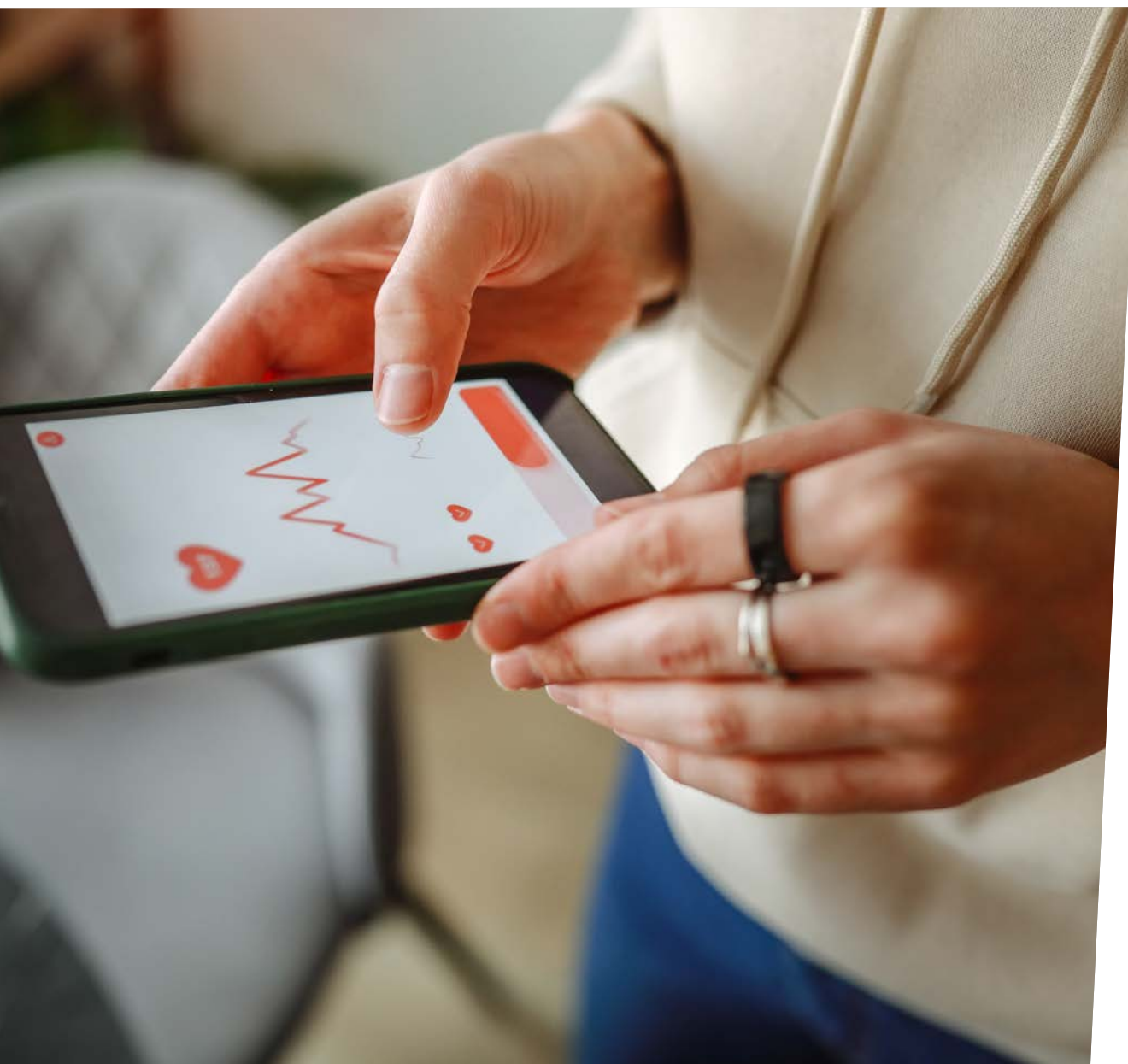
- Customer Service: To detect and respond

to customer emotions, leading to more personalized and effective interactions

- Mental Health: To identify signs of distress and provide timely therapeutic interventions or counseling
- Education: To identify students' emotional states, such as frustration or boredom, and adapt teaching methods accordingly
- Entertainment: To enhance gaming experiences by adapting the content based on the user's emotional responses
- Marketing: To analyze consumer reactions to advertisements and products, providing insights into emotional engagement and preferences

Emotional AI holds great promise; however, it is essential to approach its development and deployment with careful consideration of ethical implications.



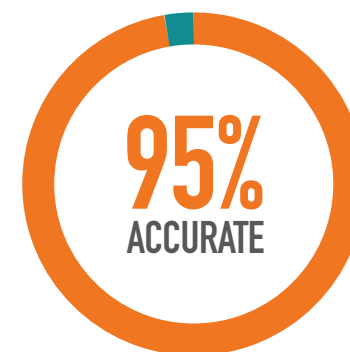


## AI & YOUR HEART HEALTH

One example of emotional AI helping to monitor a person's health comes from the American Heart Association. It developed an app to detect a person's blood pressure levels from “watching” two-minute videos.

The app diagnoses are based on:

- facial blood-flow signals (light near skin surface, which reflects hemoglobin concentration)
- physical characteristics (age, weight, skin tone)



The app has detected blood pressure with around 95% accuracy.

*Source: Luo, H., Yang, D., Barszczyk, A., Vempala, N., Wei, J., Wu, S. J., ... & Feng, Z. P. (2019). Smartphone-based blood pressure measurement using transdermal optical imaging technology. Circulation: Cardiovascular Imaging, 12(8), e008857.*

# SMART DRESSING: TECH-ENHANCED CLOTHING

Not long ago, wearable technology referred to items such as a Fitbit wristband. Today, developers and manufacturers are blurring the lines between clothing and biometric technologies to provide an array of benefits to the wearer, from monitoring health to improving workouts.

Here are some examples that blend function and fashion to support personal wellness:

- **Nadi X Yoga Pants:** These smart pants contain embedded sensors that provide gentle vibrations to guide the wearer into correct yoga postures, enhancing the effectiveness of their practice.
- **Ralph Lauren PoloTech Shirt:** Another exercise enhancer, this shirt has silver fibers woven into the fabric to monitor biometric data including heart rate, breathing depth, and activity levels. The data syncs with an accompanying app to provide real-time workout feedback.

- **Lumos Smart Helmet:** This cycling helmet has integrated LED lights and turn signals controlled via a handlebar remote or smartphone, enhancing safety for cyclists.
- **Spinali Design Smart Bikini:** This smart bikini has a UV sensor that alerts the wearer via a smartphone app when it's time to reapply sunscreen, helping to prevent sunburn and skin damage.
- **Sensoria Smart Socks:** The textile sensors in these socks track running metrics, including cadence, foot landing technique, and distance. The data is sent to an app for real-time coaching and performance tracking.

The rate at which people adopt high-tech clothing may be limited by the clothes' affordability as well as by concerns about privacy—since personal data collected by tech like this is not often secure. However, advances in high-tech wellness clothing can keep us safer and on track for smarter workouts.



# “WE’RE ON MUTE”: SILENT MEETINGS

Workers whose schedules are full of back-to-back meetings may welcome an innovative approach to information sharing. Silent meetings can enhance productivity, focus, and inclusivity by allowing participants to contribute in a quieter, more structured environment than typical in-person or virtual meetings.

During a silent meeting, participants communicate primarily through written means, via shared documents, chat platforms, and/or collaborative software (such as Google Docs, online white boards, Microsoft Teams, or Slack). Each person writes comments, questions, and feedback directly into these shared resources, allowing everyone to see and respond to each other’s input.

By eliminating verbal discussions, silent meetings reduce interruptions and encourage participants to think deeply about their responses. Silent meetings also promote inclusivity by giving all participants an equal opportunity to contribute. These meetings are arguably more efficient, as they reduce the likelihood of extended discussions that veer off-topic.

Some organizations may use silent meetings in conjunction with traditional meetings to gain the benefits of both formats. For example, they might start with a silent meeting to gather initial thoughts, followed by a verbal discussion to address complex issues or finalize decisions.

**DURING A SILENT MEETING, PARTICIPANTS COMMUNICATE PRIMARILY THROUGH WRITTEN MEANS.**

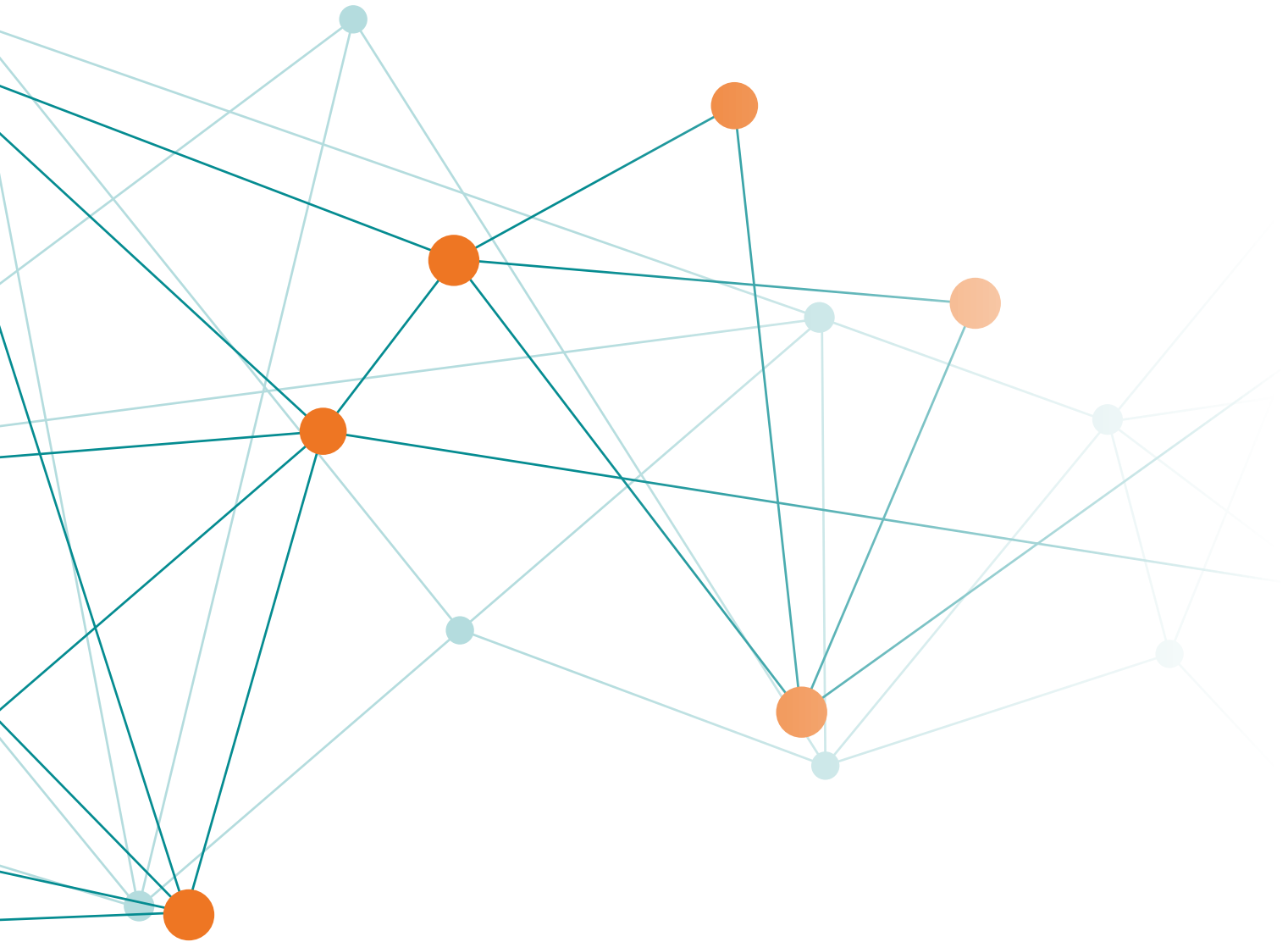




## TIPS FOR RUNNING A SILENT MEETING

- 1 Before your first silent meeting, introduce participants to the concept of these meetings and outline the tools you will use.
- 2 Forward a detailed agenda to participants to help them stay on topic. Include the meeting's purpose and desired outcomes.
- 3 At the start of your meeting, review guidelines for effectively contributing to written communication (be concise, take your time, actively listen).
- 4 The facilitator's job is to monitor all communication channels to guide discussion and address questions, as well as encourage participation by everyone.

Source: <https://medium.com/@justinbateh/how-to-implement-silent-meetings-8bc402c96080>



**SLEEP**

# REST EASY: SMART MATTRESSES & PILLOWS

With growing recognition of the importance of sleep for our overall wellness, product developers are turning to bedding.

Innovative mattresses and pillows that adjust firmness, track sleep metrics, and even regulate temperature are growing in popularity.

Various mattress and pillow products come equipped with sensors that track sleep metrics such as sleep duration, sleep stages (light, deep, REM), heart rate, breathing patterns, and movement. Based on the data collected, some of these products provide personalized sleep coaching tips designed to improve sleep habits and overall sleep quality.

Smart mattresses can also integrate with other smart-home devices, such as lighting, thermostats, and voice assistants. For example, some smart mattresses are designed

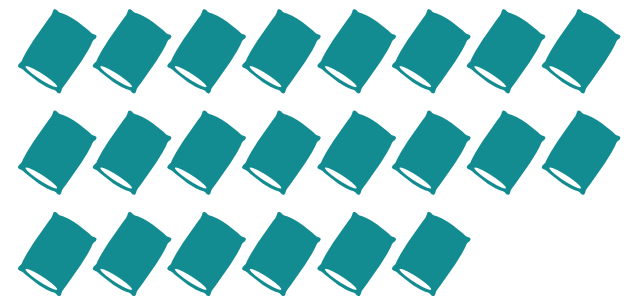
to dim the lights or adjust the thermostat when the user lies down to sleep.

Certain smart mattresses and pillows can help reduce snoring as well as improve sleep. Designed with built-in microphones and sensors, they gently vibrate or adjust the pillow's position to encourage the sleeper to change positions. Speakers in smart pillows may also play soothing sounds or white noise, or even connect to a music playlist, helping users relax and fall asleep more easily. Lastly, smart pillows often feature a smart alarm function, which uses gentle vibrations to wake the user during the lightest phase of sleep within a set window. This can help you wake up feeling more refreshed and less groggy.

These sleep products aim to leverage technology to create a more personalized and optimized sleep experience, ultimately contributing to better health and well-being.

## PUTTING APNEA & INSOMNIA TO REST

The increasing popularity of sleep pillows comes during a time when the U.S. is seeing an overall increase in people with sleeping disorders, including apnea and insomnia. According to the American Sleep Apnea Association, around 22 million Americans are affected by sleep apnea. Perhaps they can get some help from smart pillows!



## 22 MILLION AMERICANS



## FROM THE GROUND UP: EARTHING SHEETS

There is a school of thought that contact with the earth's surface is good for our physical health. *Grounding*, also known as *earthing*, refers to direct skin-to-ground contact or contact through the conduit of a product that connects us physically to the natural electric charge of the earth, transferring electrons into the body.

Advocates of earthing suggest that it can help reduce inflammation, improve sleep, reduce stress, and provide other health benefits by balancing the body's electrical charge and reducing free radicals.

Grounding products such as adhesive patches and earthing shoes can be either plugged into a wall socket or have a wire that goes directly into the soil, conducting the earth's electricity to the body.

Among these products are earthing sheets—bedding typically made with conductive materials, such as silver threads or carbon fibers, woven into the fabric. The sheets are

connected to a grounding source either by plugging them into a grounded outlet using a special cord, or by connecting them to a ground rod placed in the earth outdoors. This connection allows for the transfer of electrons from the Earth into the body during sleep. In addition to the benefits mentioned, earthing sheets have promoted better sleep and less stress.

It's important to note that while there has been some scientific research demonstrating benefits of earthing sheets, more research is needed. Therefore, it is recommended that anyone considering using earthing sheets should consult with a health care professional.



# PERSONALIZED MEDICINE



# COOKED TO ORDER: DNA-BASED DIET PLANS

Whether a diet plan targets better nutrition or weight loss, it will surely be more effective if it is personalized to the point of being tailored to an individual's genetic makeup. DNA-based diet plans, also known as nutrigenomics or personalized nutrition, are designed with the understanding that genetic variations can influence how different bodies respond to nutrients, impacting metabolism and overall health. These variations can also affect how efficiently essential nutrients like vitamin D, vitamin B12, magnesium, and omega-3 fatty acids are absorbed and

processed—indicating any potential needs for targeted supplementation.

Customizing a diet begins with genetic testing, typically using a saliva sample. The saliva is analyzed to identify specific genetic markers that are associated with various metabolic pathways and nutritional needs. Based on the resulting analysis, nutritionists and dietitians can create a customized diet plan that includes specific food recommendations that align with the individual's genetic predispositions. For example, someone with a genetic variation

that affects fat metabolism might be advised to follow a lower-fat diet.

Unlike one-size-fits-all diets, DNA-based plans offer a high level of personalization, potentially leading to more effective and sustainable results. By addressing genetic predispositions, these plans can help mitigate risks for certain health conditions and promote overall well-being.

Last, understanding genetic tendencies can help individuals make more informed choices and adopt healthier behaviors.

## IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY START

DNA testing for diet also allows researchers to check genes related to lactose intolerance, sensitivities to gluten, and even peanut allergies. This can lead to the easy identification of food-related sensitivities without potentially uncomfortable trial-and-error tests.



# FOLLOW YOUR GUT: MICROBIOME ANALYSIS

Another emerging subfield within personalized wellness focuses on understanding the composition and function of an individual's gut microbiome, the diverse community of microorganisms living in the digestive tract. These microorganisms play a crucial role in digestion, metabolism, immune function, and overall health. By analyzing the microbiome, nutritionists can develop tailored dietary recommendations that promote a healthy balance of gut bacteria, which in turn can positively impact health and well-being.

The process begins with the collection of a stool sample. The sample is analyzed using

advanced genomic sequencing technologies to create a detailed profile of the individual's gut microbiome. This profile includes information about the diversity and abundance of various microbial species, as well as the presence of beneficial and potentially harmful bacteria. Analysis also includes metabolic activities of the microbiome, including the production of short-chain fatty acids, vitamins, and other metabolites that influence health.

Similar to DNA-based diet plans, nutritionists can develop personalized dietary plans based on the microbiome profile that aim to optimize gut health. Recommendations may include specific

instructions for the following:

- probiotics (strains of beneficial bacteria that enhance the gut microbiome).
- prebiotics (dietary fibers and other compounds that promote growth of beneficial gut bacteria).
- adjustments to food choices to support a healthy microbiome. For example, individuals with low microbial diversity may be advised to increase their intake of fiber-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and avoid foods that may cause inflammation or feed harmful bacteria.

Personalized nutrition plans based on microbiome analysis are dynamic. Regular monitoring of the gut microbiome can help track changes over time and allow for adjustments to the diet as needed.

**MICROORGANISMS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN DIGESTION, METABOLISM, IMMUNE FUNCTION, AND OVERALL HEALTH.**

# MEDS REVIEW: GENETIC TESTING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

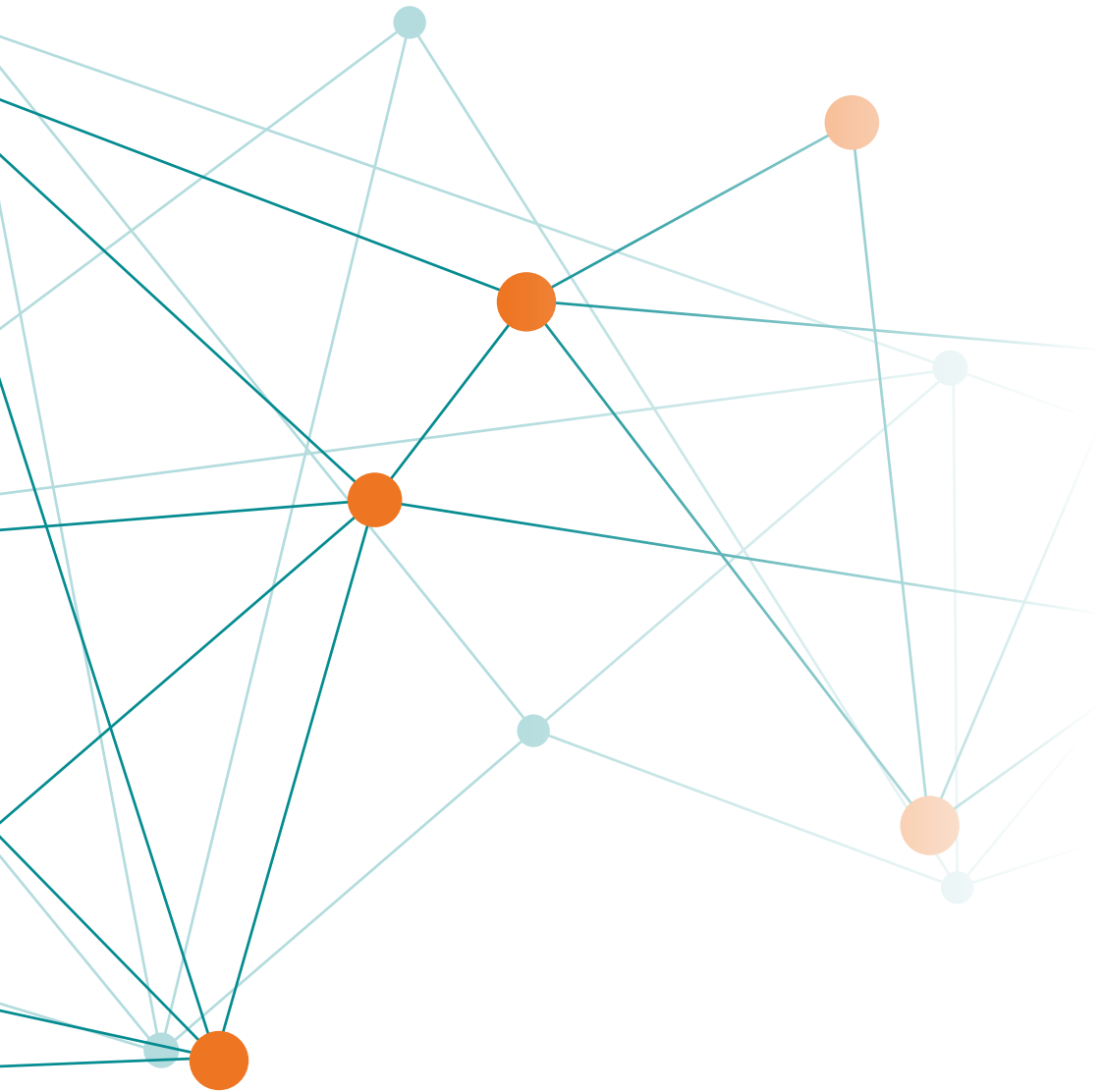
Genetic testing for mental health is an emerging field that aims to personalize treatment based on an individual's genetic makeup. This approach, often referred to as pharmacogenomics or pharmacogenetics, involves analyzing specific genes that influence how a person metabolizes and responds to medications commonly used to treat mental health conditions such as depression, ADHD, anxiety, and bipolar disorder.

Traditionally, finding the right psychiatric medication and dosage can be a lengthy process of trial and error. Genetic testing can help streamline this process by identifying which medications are likely to be most effective for an individual and which are more likely to cause adverse side effects. This is based on variations in genes that are encoded for enzymes responsible for drug metabolism.

Test results can also provide guidance on the optimal dosage of medications. For example, certain genetic variations may indicate that a person will metabolize a drug very quickly, necessitating a higher dose for efficacy; if the person metabolizes a drug more slowly, a lower dose might be suggested to avoid toxicity. While pharmacogenomics is primarily focused on medication, genetic insights can sometimes inform other aspects of treatment, such as the likelihood of benefiting from certain types of psychotherapy.

Genetic testing for mental health has the potential to revolutionize the way psychiatric conditions are treated by making medication management more precise and personalized. It is important to use these tests as part of a comprehensive treatment plan that considers all aspects of an individual's health and well-being.





# PETS



## CANINE CONNECTIONS: REDEFINING PET SOCIALIZING

Love animals? Looking for a side hustle or to make connections? There is an app (or many!) for that. People are using apps to meet all their pet needs, from scheduling pet walks and playdates to finding friends and even love. These apps are revolutionizing how pet lovers connect—with animals and each other. A shared love of animals can be a unifier—bringing people together for routines, activities, and everyday moments.

With almost a million platform participants between them, apps like Rover.com and Wag! are popular for pairing pet owners with people looking for flexible work, extra income, and companionship through dog walking and cat-sitting. For those looking to volunteer these services, the app Meet My Doggo helps to make those connections.

But pet owners aren't just looking for walkers or sitters; social connections are also important. Apps like Pawmates and DogHood encourage dog owners to set up playdates (or pupdates) and meetups for dogs and their owners, turning a routine walk into an opportunity to make a friend.

Additionally, some pet owners are looking to find more than puppy love for themselves. According to a Rover.com survey of selected users, 60% said they would swipe right on a profile with a dog. That's where apps like Puppi Lovers and FetchaDate come in. They are designed to match pet owners based on their shared love for animals and dog compatibility.

Whether you're a pet owner or a volunteer walker, or looking to date a fellow animal lover, these apps show us that pets can help us to build deeper connections with others.

# DOGGY DATA: TRACKING PET FITNESS AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

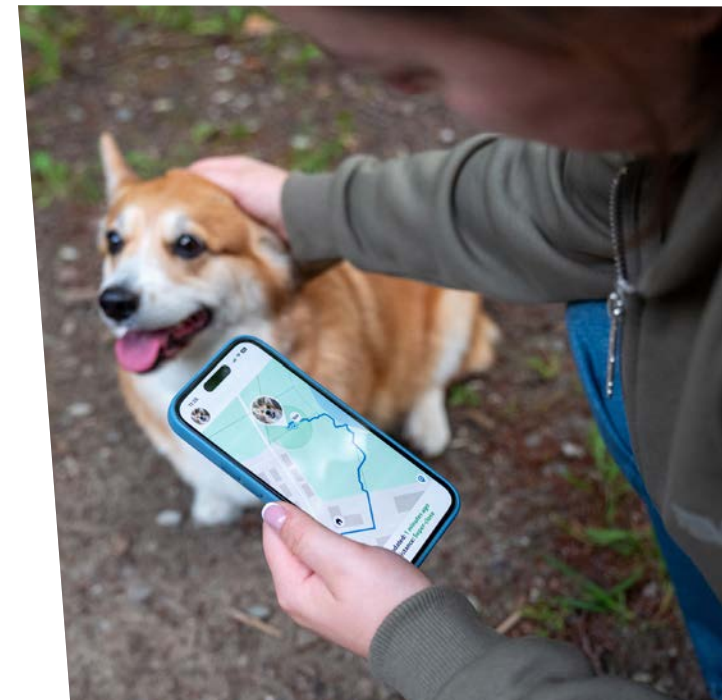
In recent years, wearable devices and wellness apps have become popular for people—and now pets are getting in on the technology as well. The good news is pets are already living longer than ever, and as they age alongside us, more pet owners are turning to technology to help them lead healthier, happier lives. Pet wellness technology is helping owners take a more proactive role in their animals' care.

From activity monitors to emotional support tools, the range of tools for helping care for our beloved companions is expanding. Pet fitness trackers like Animo or the PetPace collar are used by owners to monitor a pet's activity level, calories burned, and sleep patterns. But these apps go beyond providing data on fitness levels or the length of a cat nap; they give owners information they can use to see changes in

their animal's behavior, from scratching or barking to more anxious moments. These insights help owners make more informed, proactive decisions when it comes to their pet's health.

Like humans, our pets' wellness includes emotional wellness as well. Emotional health tools are gaining attention, particularly for pets who stress easily or have separation anxiety. Furbo animal cameras make leaving your pet a little easier with their interactive features, including treat-tossing, two-way audio, and alerts. Furbo's latest feature—Furbo Nanny—is an AI technology that offers a more personalized approach to watching over your pet. The subscription video provides daily summaries and weekly recap videos, and monitors activity levels. A lower-tech option is Pet Acoustics, a sound box with

curated playlists for all types of animals, including dogs, cats, birds, horses, and more. The playlists are designed to soothe a pet's nervous system, lowering the pulse rate and improving heart rate functions.





# SUSTAINABILITY



# RECLAIMING FOOD SYSTEMS: FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Food sovereignty is a movement regaining attention globally as food insecurity and climate change continue to be pressing global issues. First introduced in the 1990s by La Via Campesina, this global movement of small farmers, fishers, and indigenous people promotes the “right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.”

More than just access to food, food sovereignty is about giving power to local communities and producers to shape their own food system. With food sovereignty, farmers can decide what and how much they grow, fishers can employ more sustainable practices, and consumers can help boost local economic growth.

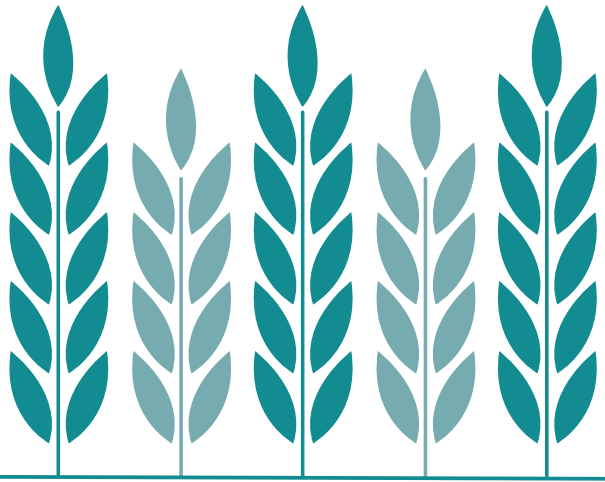
## THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AS NOTED BY THE U.S. FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ALLIANCE:

- 1 Focus on Food for People** – Prioritizing producing local, healthy, culturally appropriate food
- 2 Valuing Food Providers** – Supporting farmers, fishers, and food workers with fair wages and resources
- 3 Localized Food Systems** – Reducing dependence on imported food and supporting regional agriculture
- 4 Building Knowledge and Skills** – Promoting agroecological farming techniques that respect the environment
- 5 Working with Nature** – Rejecting industrialized farming that depletes soil, water, and biodiversity
- 6 Democratic Control** – Empowering communities to make decisions about their food systems

**FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IS ABOUT GIVING POWER TO LOCAL PRODUCERS TO SHAPE THEIR OWN FOOD SYSTEM.**

## WAYS TO SUPPORT FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

- **Shop locally** – empower local producers by buying at a farmers’ market, a local farm, or utilizing a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.
- **Grow your own food** – Garden at home or join a local community garden to reduce emissions and packaging waste.
- **Cook by the season** – Seasonal produce is fresher and often healthier because it is harvested during peak ripeness.





## FARM-FRESH ADVENTURES: AGRITOURISM

Maybe it's not the ocean calling your name for your next vacation, but the crow of a rooster in a farmyard. Driven by an increasing demand for sustainable travel and unique experiences, tourists are bypassing tropical beaches for the next hot destination: farms. Agritourism is a fast-growing subset of the tourism industry that connects travelers and farms, with an estimated market size of over \$8 billion.

Vacationers visit working farms in locations near and far from home, and immerse themselves in daily chores or learning experiences. From planting and harvesting crops to feeding animals and learning about local farming practices, farm stays offer people an opportunity to reconnect with nature and unplug from their hectic lives.

*Source: <https://usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/what-is-food-sovereignty/>*

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A major focus of agritourism is educating consumers on sustainable farm practices and their benefits, both for farms and the environment. Visitors learn about organic farming, conservation techniques, and permaculture.

A highlight for many agritourists is the farm-to-table dining experience. Not only is this practice considered by many to be a pillar of sustainable farming practices, it also offers consumers an opportunity to experience the freshest ingredients and discover the local food systems.

Agritourism builds a bridge between urban and rural communities, enhancing the appreciation consumers have for sustainable agricultural practices around the world while promoting a more balanced and respectful relationship with the environment.



## AGRITOURISM: NOT JUST FOR VACATION!

Have you ever participated in a corn maze at a local farm or visited a pumpkin patch? You're participating in another aspect of agritourism. You don't necessarily have to take a farm vacation to reap the benefits agritourism has to offer.

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