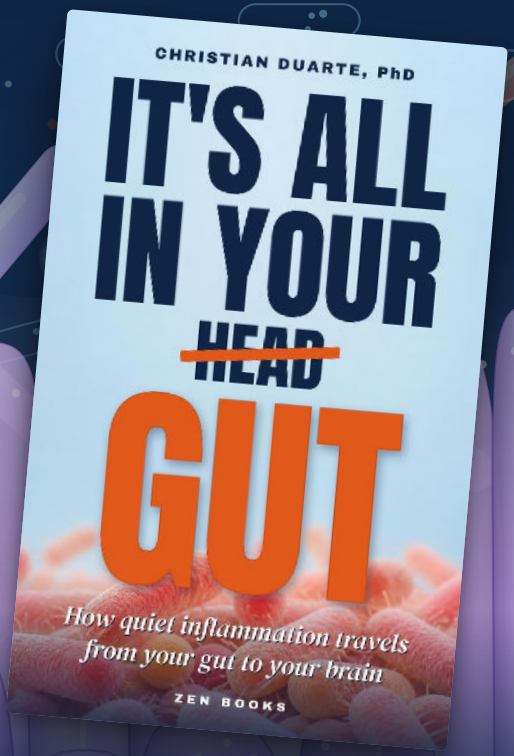
IT'S ALL IN YOUR GUT · COMPANION

The Groundwork Workbook

Every weekly action and sheet from the book, ready to print, with its figures in full color, and room to write down what your own body is telling you.



Christian Duarte, PhD
ZEN BOOKS

A free companion for readers
christianduarte.com/gut-workbook

BEFORE YOU START

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook follows *It's All in Your Gut* chapter by chapter. It doesn't replace the book: it gives you the pages the book asks you to fill in. Each practice carries a seal, so you always know how firm the ground is under that step.

Strong

●●●●

Randomized trials, or several reviews that agree. You can lean on it.

In the book: Ultra-processed diets led people to eat about 500 more calories a day (Chapter 9).

Moderate

●●●○

Good evidence with a known limit: a neighboring field, or one kind of study.

In the book: Self-monitoring helps diet and exercise programs; the Signal Map borrows it (Chapter 3).

Preliminary

●●○○

A described mechanism or a first result, not yet confirmed in people like you.

In the book: Hard training may send lactate to gut bacteria that make butyrate (Chapter 17).

Unsupported

●○○○

In circulation, with no test and no evidence behind it.

In the book: Leaky gut syndrome as a diagnosis that explains everything (Chapter 5).

20
Weekly actions
The "This Week" that closes every chapter, each on its own page, with its three levels.

18
Sheets to fill in
Where You Are Now, the Signal Map, the appointment sheet, the 30-day log and the rest.

4 + 12
New exercises and plates
Four exercises built from the book, and twelve of its figures in full color.

READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

Each page follows its chapter in the book. The page is the tool; the chapter is the reason. Read it, then print the page.

WRITE IN IT

Print as many copies as you need, or fill the pages in on a tablet. Your notes are the point.

KEEP IT HONEST

Every practice carries the seal the book gives it. A notebook doesn't diagnose anything, and some signs mean you close it and see a doctor (Chapter 13).

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AT THE END

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FROM THE END OF THE BOOK · DAY ONE

Where You Are Now

This isn't a diagnostic test and it doesn't score any disease. It's the Signal Map in questionnaire form, so you can fill it out at one sitting and come back to it a month from now. Think about the last four weeks and circle the first number that comes to mind.

0 almost never 1 the odd day 2 several days a week 3 almost every day

SLEEP

SUBTOTAL ____ / 12

It takes me more than half an hour to fall asleep.	0 1 2 3
I wake up during the night and have trouble getting back to sleep.	0 1 2 3
I get up without feeling rested.	0 1 2 3
I need caffeine to get the morning going.	0 1 2 3

DIGESTION

SUBTOTAL ____ / 12

My belly feels distended, especially from midafternoon on.	0 1 2 3
I have gas or gut noises that bother me.	0 1 2 3
My bowel habits change for no clear reason.	0 1 2 3
There are foods I avoid out of fear of how they'll sit.	0 1 2 3

ENERGY

SUBTOTAL ____ / 12

My energy crashes in the midafternoon.	0 1 2 3
I have trouble holding my attention on long tasks.	0 1 2 3
I end the day with no room for anything that isn't mandatory.	0 1 2 3
My head feels thick, or I have trouble finding words.	0 1 2 3

MOOD

SUBTOTAL ____ / 12

I snap at small things.	0 1 2 3
I have trouble switching off when I finally stop.	0 1 2 3
I lose interest in things I used to enjoy.	0 1 2 3
I feel like I'm always running behind.	0 1 2 3

MOVEMENT

SUBTOTAL ____ / 12

I spend more than two hours in a row in a chair without getting up.	0 1 2 3
I end the week without having walked continuously on a single day.	0 1 2 3
Three flights of stairs leave me out of breath.	0 1 2 3
I struggle to find a slot to move and put it off until tomorrow.	0 1 2 3

DATE AND TOTAL

Today _____

Total of the five ____ / 60

Write down the five figures and the date. You'll need them on day thirty, on the next page.

Five Numbers and a Date

WHAT EACH DOMAIN MEANS

0 to 3 That front isn't your problem right now. Leave it alone and don't spend effort on it.

4 to 7 There's load, but it isn't where the pressure is greatest. It will benefit from what you do elsewhere.

8 to 12 This is where the work begins. If two domains fall in this band, pick the higher one and forget the other for a month.

WHAT THE TOTAL MEANS

0–15 The ground is reasonably in order. This book serves you as maintenance, not repair.

16–30 Spread-out load and no front collapsed. The most common profile, and the one that responds best to the four-week plan.

31–45 Several domains pressing at once. Resist the temptation to attack them all: the staggered plan exists for this case.

46–60 A good deal to put in order, and best not done alone. On top of the book, a doctor's visit is in order.

WHERE TO START · THE HIGHEST DOMAIN IS YOUR FIRST CHAPTER

SLEEP Start with Settle, and read the chapter on bad nights first.

ENERGY Start with Rebalance and pay attention to the glucose dips after eating. Train comes right behind.

MOVEMENT Start with Train, with the floor where the chapter sets it: ten minutes after dinner.

DIGESTION Start with Rebalance, with the gut border read first, and go back over the inflammation chapter.

MOOD Start with Settle, and read the gut-brain chapter.

A TIE Pick the one that bothers you most day to day, not the one that seems most serious.

A MONTH FROM NOW

	DAY 1	DAY 30
Sleep		
Digestion		
Energy		
Mood		
Movement		
Total		

Fill it out again on day thirty, and do it before you look at the earlier result. If you read them side by side, memory adjusts the answers.

WHAT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS NOT

This doesn't replace anyone. If there's blood in your stool, weight loss you weren't trying for, fever, vomiting that won't stop, pain that wakes you at night, trouble swallowing, or a change in your bowel habits that lasts more than six weeks, the score doesn't matter: that gets checked, and Chapter 13 says what to ask.

One more thing. Fill it out today and don't come back to it until day thirty. Watching yourself daily doesn't give you more information and does produce more symptoms.

PART I

What You Feel

Three chapters to put a name, a time and a number on what you feel.

1	You're Not Imagining It	8
2	Inflammation: The Word We Use for Everything	11
3	Your Signal Map	14



PART I · CHAPTER 1

You're Not Imagining It

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

A reference range is the middle 95 percent of a group of healthy people. Falling inside it doesn't mean you're at your best.

"Everything looks normal" means "it isn't any of the things I checked for." That's good news, but it doesn't answer your question.

Your symptoms live in different offices, and nobody has been given the job of looking at them together.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Your Three Complaints · p. 9

PLATE Figure 1.3 in color · p. 10

CHAPTER 1 · THIS WEEK

Your Three Complaints

Before anything changes, write down what you feel. Not the explanation, not the diagnosis: the complaint itself, in your own words, and how long it has been with you.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ A pen and this page
- ☐ Five quiet minutes
- ☐ No search engine open

1 THIS WEEK

WRITE

Three complaints

Write down your three main complaints and how long you've had each one.

2 SAME DAY

HOLD BACK

Don't interpret

Don't explain any of them. You are collecting, not diagnosing.

3 ANY DAY

IF IT'S HARD

One is enough

If only one comes to mind, one is enough.

WHY IT WORKS PRELIMINARY

Left alone, symptoms like these tend to stay. That finding comes from a single study, in a single country, with 245 people followed for six months: a signal, not a law.

A NOTE OF CARE

Normal bloodwork usually hides nothing, and that rule-out is worth a great deal. If a complaint is on the alarm list in Chapter 13, it goes to a doctor, not to this page.

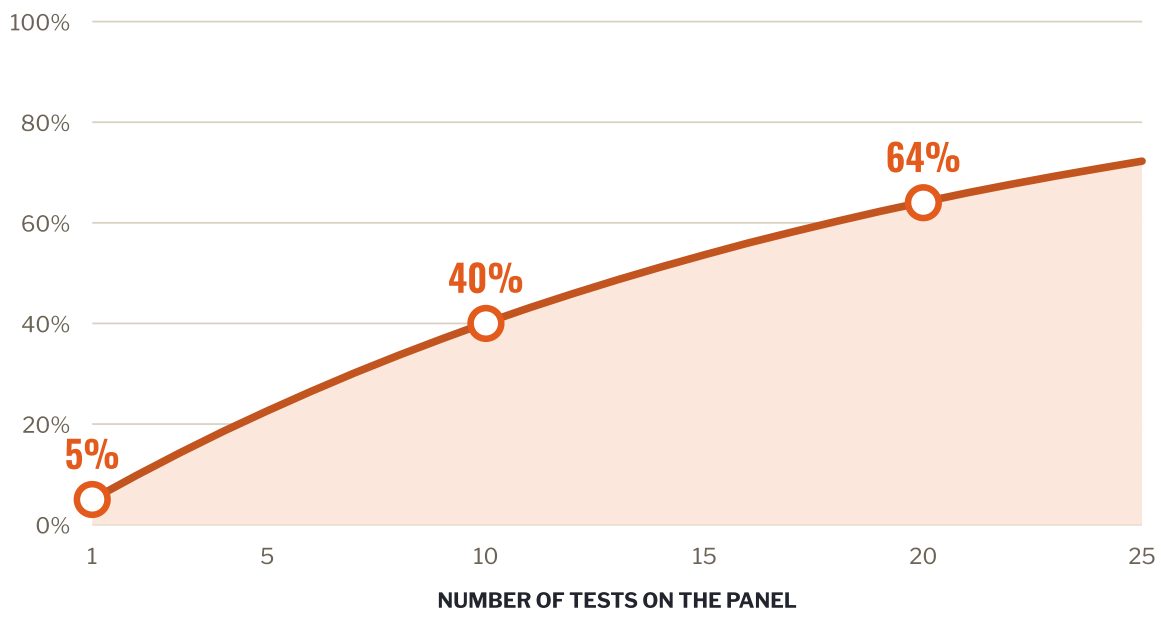
YOUR THREE COMPLAINTS · DATE _____

	COMPLAINT, IN YOUR OWN WORDS	WITH ME SINCE
1		
2		
3		

PLATE · CHAPTER 1 · FIGURE 1.3

Twenty Tests, Two in Three See Red

Healthy people with at least one result flagged as abnormal, by the number of tests on the panel.



5 in 100 healthy people fall outside any one reference range, by design

64% of healthy people see at least one result in red on a 20-test panel

> *Each test leaves out 5 of every 100 healthy people by design. Add tests and the chance of something in red climbs, even when nothing is wrong.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 1.3

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 1.3. Calculated as $1 - 0.95^{n}$: each test leaves out 5 of every 100 healthy people, and the tests are treated as independent.

EVIDENCE NO LEVEL

The book gives this figure no evidence level: it's arithmetic, not a study. Doles, N., et al. (2025). Interpretating normal values and reference ranges for laboratory tests. *J Am Board Fam Med,* 38(1), 174–179. doi.org/10.3122/jabfm.2024.240224R1



PART I · CHAPTER 2

Inflammation: The Word We Use for Everything

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

Acute inflammation is the response that repairs: intense, local, and finite.

Chronic low-grade inflammation is a persistent, half-power activation. It's associated with several diseases, which is different from causing them.

Being bloated isn't being inflamed, and it's almost never about having more gas.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Name It: Bloated or Heavy · p. 12

SHEET Bloated or Heavy, Seven Days · p. 13

Name It: Bloated or Heavy

Bloated, heavy, gassy and inflamed are not the same thing. Giving each episode a word and a time is the first step to knowing which one you actually have.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ The log sheet on the next page
- ☐ A pen
- ☐ A few seconds each time

1 EACH TIME



NAME IT

One word

Every time you notice something in your abdomen, give it a word: bloated or heavy.

2 EACH TIME



ADD

The time

Add the time and nothing else.

3 BAD WEEK



IF IT'S HARD

Once a day

If the week goes badly, checking in once a day is enough.

The sheet for this week is on page 13.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

Bloating is usually a more sensitive gut and a reflex that arranges the contents badly, not more gas and not inflammation. Knowing that mechanism doesn't make it harmless.

A NOTE OF CARE

Distension still deserves a doctor's visit when it persists or comes with any alarm sign from Chapter 13. When something promises to fight your inflammation, ask which of the three.

NOTES

CHAPTER 2 · SHEET

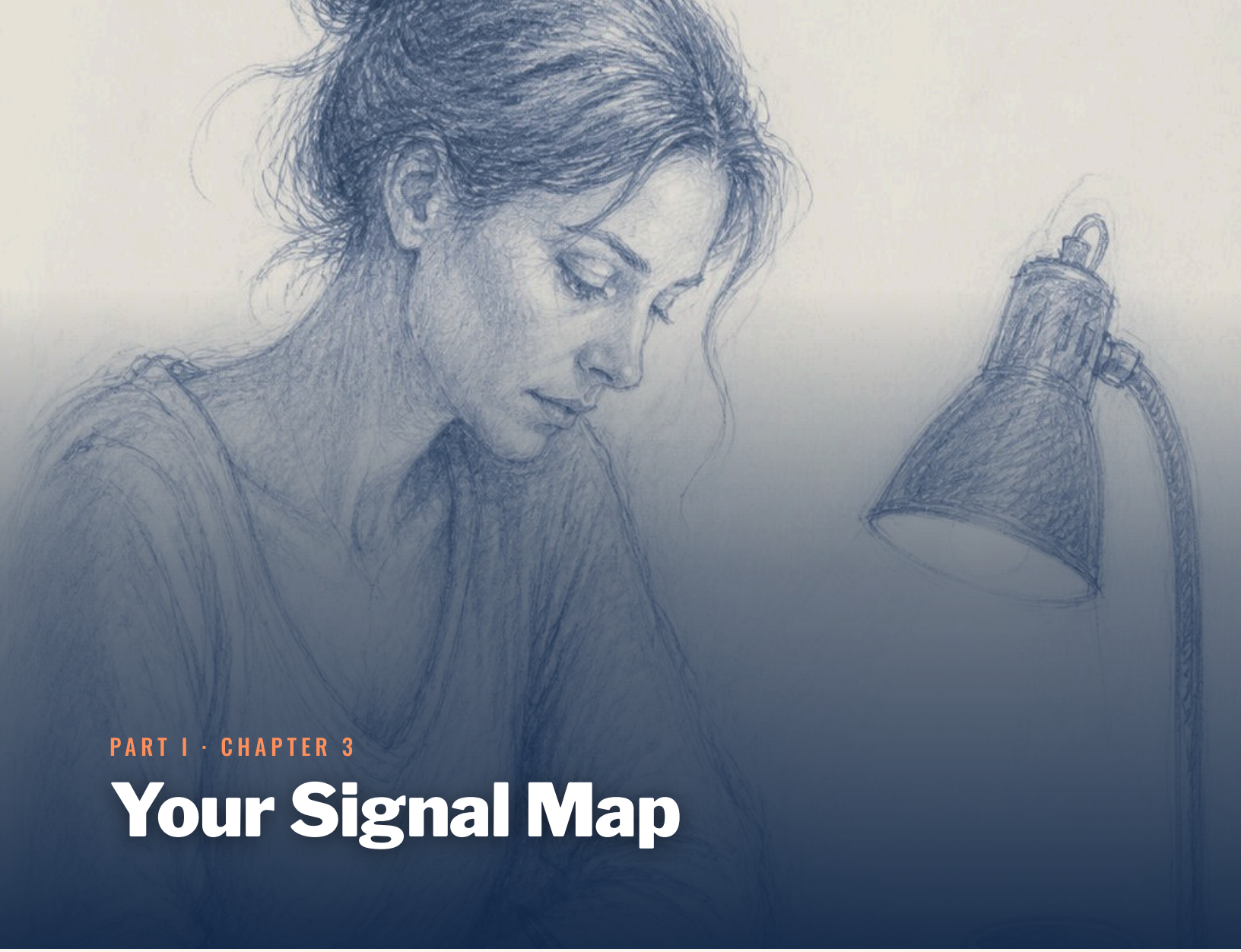
Bloated or Heavy, Seven Days

Each time you notice something in your abdomen: a word and the time. Nothing else.

	EPISODE 1 circle B or H · write the time	EPISODE 2 circle B or H · write the time	EPISODE 3 circle B or H · write the time	EPISODE 4 circle B or H · write the time
1 DAY	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____
2 DAY	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____
3 DAY	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____
4 DAY	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____
5 DAY	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____
6 DAY	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____
7 DAY	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____	B H _____

B · Bloated: the feeling of pressure or fullness. **H · Heavy:** the slow, full stomach after a meal. A word and a time, nothing else.

Day 7: how many B, how many H, and at what times of day do they cluster? _____



PART I · CHAPTER 3

Your Signal Map

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

In response to any bodily signal we assemble five pieces: what it is, why it's happening, how long it will last, how it affects me, and whether I can do anything about it.

Your problem right now isn't diagnostic, it's informational. Recording what happens isn't the prelude to change. It's part of the change.

Watching your body for too long increases what you feel. That's why the map lasts seven days and carries its closing date from the first minute.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Your Signal Map · p. 15

SHEET Signal Map, Seven Days · p. 16

CHAPTER 3 · THIS WEEK

Your Signal Map

What you're missing isn't a diagnosis but data about yourself. For seven days you collect it, five loose lines a day, and you don't interpret any of it yet. A discomfort with no name fills the whole room; the same discomfort with a time and a number fills one line.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Any notebook, or the sheet in this workbook
- ☐ A pen
- ☐ Two minutes a day, at any time

1 DAY 1



PREPARE

Two dates

Write today's date at the top and, under it, the date of the seventh day. The second date matters more: it makes this an experiment, not a habit.

2 2 MIN



EACH DAY

Five lines

Sleep: hours and times you woke. Digestion: bloating or discomfort, what time, 0 to 10. Energy: when it dropped. Mood: one word. Movement: how much, stairs included.

3 ANY DAY



IF THE WEEK GOES SIDEWAYS

Keep sleep

Can't manage all five? Write down sleep alone. It drags the others along most, and you already have the data when you open your eyes.

4 DAY 7



CLOSE

Shut the notebook

Close it and don't open it again until the method (Part V). Until then, no obligation to watch yourself.

The sheet for this week is on page 16.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

In diet and exercise programs, the ones that included self-monitoring, combined with another self-regulation technique, worked better than the ones that didn't. That finding comes from a neighboring field: there is no direct proof yet that a seven-day notebook improves fatigue.

A NOTE OF CARE

Don't look up what each line means; for seven days you collect, you don't explain. If something shows up that doesn't fit (pain that wakes you at night, blood, weight you're losing without trying), the notebook closes and you make an appointment.

NOTES

CHAPTER 3 · SHEET

Signal Map, Seven Days

Started _____ Closes on day seven _____ Five loose lines; two minutes.

	SLEEP hours · times woke	DIGESTION bloating? what time · 0–10	ENERGY when it dropped	MOOD one word	MOVEMENT how much	AROUND YOU optional sixth line
1 DAY						
2 DAY						
3 DAY						
4 DAY						
5 DAY						
6 DAY						
7 DAY						

II

PART II

The Ground You Carry Inside

The ecosystem in your gut, its border, what feeds it and how it talks to your brain.

4	The Trillions Living With You	18
5	The Gut Border	22
6	When Your Microbes Eat With You	24
7	Your Gut Talks to Your Brain	27
8	The Way Back Down	32



PART II · CHAPTER 4

The Trillions Living With You

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

About 38 trillion bacteria, the same order of magnitude as your own cells, weighing about seven ounces.

There are no good bacteria and bad bacteria. There are functions, and function depends on context.

Diversity is for comparing populations, not for grading you.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Count Your Plants · p. 19

SHEET Plant Count, One Week · p. 20

PLATE Figure 4.2 in color · p. 21

Count Your Plants

Count how many different plants you ate last week. Just count, without changing anything yet. The variety on the menu upstairs looks a lot like the variety in the community downstairs.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ The plant count sheet
- ☐ Last week's grocery receipt, if it helps
- ☐ Two minutes

1 · WHAT COUNTS



RULES

Different, not times

Vegetables, fruit, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices. Chickpeas count once; two apples of different varieties count as two.

2 · MINIMUM



VERSION

Count one day

Yesterday, from memory, in two minutes.

3 · MIDDLE



VERSION

Rebuild the week

Reconstruct the whole week in one sitting, with the grocery receipt in front of you.

4 · AMBITIOUS



VERSION

Seven days live

Write it down as you go for seven days. Almost nobody gets it right from memory.

The sheet for this week is on page 20.

WHY IT WORKS · PRELIMINARY

People who reported more than thirty types of plants a week had a more diverse microbiome than those at ten or fewer. It's an observational study with a self-selected sample: an association, not a proof.

A NOTE OF CARE

Don't compare your number with anyone else's, don't turn it into a grade, and don't buy anything because of it. A low number only means there's room.

NOTES

CHAPTER 4 · SHEET

Plant Count, One Week

Week of _____ Just count. Don't change anything yet.

What counts: Vegetables · Fruit · Legumes · Whole grains · Nuts · Seeds · Herbs · Spices. Each different plant counts once: chickpeas eaten three times are one; two apples of different varieties are two.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40

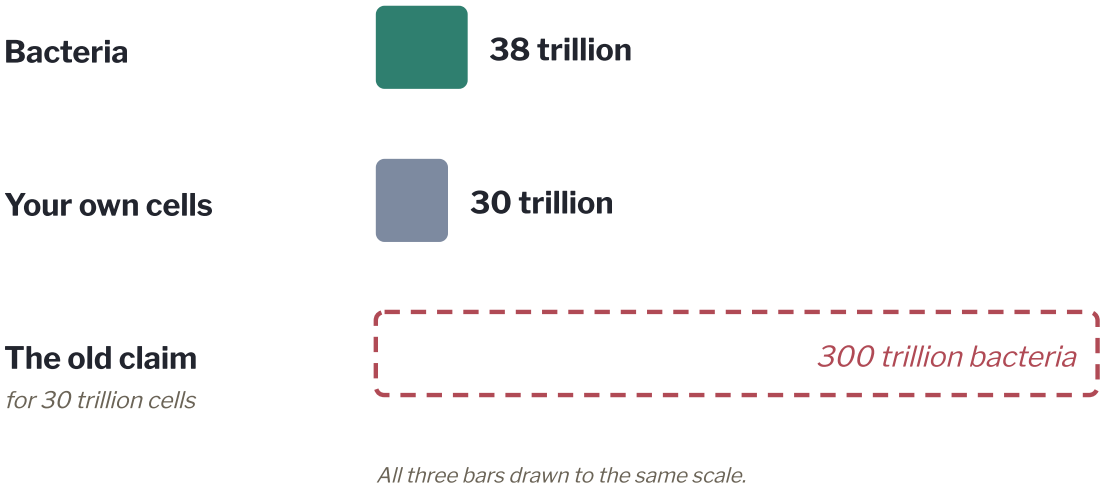
DIFFERENT PLANTS THIS WEEK

Don't compare your number with anyone else's, and don't turn it into a grade. A low number only means there's room.

PLATE · CHAPTER 4 · FIGURE 4.2

Not Ten to One

For decades books repeated ten bacteria for every human cell. Counted again in 2016, it came out close to even.



1.3 : 1 bacteria to human cells

7 oz about seven ounces in all, roughly 0.3 percent of your body weight, almost all in the colon

> *The same order of magnitude: neither ten to one nor exactly one to one. Ten to one only worked by leaving red blood cells out of the count.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 4.2

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 4.2 with the paper's own estimates. Uncertainty of about 25 percent either way.

EVIDENCE UNSUPPORTED

The seal is for the old claim: ten to one is not supported. The 38-trillion estimate is the revised count.

Sender, R., Fuchs, S., & Milo, R. (2016). Revised estimates for the number of human and bacteria cells in the body. *PLOS Biology*, 14(8), e1002533. doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1002533



PART II · CHAPTER 5

The Gut Border

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

Your gut isn't a wall, it's a border with a customs office. Letting things through is its job.

Leaky gut syndrome isn't a clinical diagnosis and has no test that confirms it.

The zonulin tests sold today don't detect zonulin.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Two Numbers: Alcohol and Painkillers · p. 23

Two Numbers: Alcohol and Painkillers

This week's action is once again to look, not to change. Alcohol and anti-inflammatory painkillers are the two factors with the most direct evidence in people, and both depend on decisions you make yourself.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Your memory of last week
- ☐ A pen
- ☐ No judgment

1 LAST WEEK



COUNT

Alcohol days

How many days you drank alcohol, and roughly how much.

2 LAST WEEK



COUNT

NSAIDs

How many times you took an anti-inflammatory painkiller: Advil or Motrin, Aleve, aspirin for pain.

3 MINIMUM



VERSION

Only the NSAIDs

Usually the easiest number to reconstruct, and the one most people underestimate.

4 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

Count it live

Keep the count this week as it happens, next to the Signal Map, to see whether your worst days fall near those days.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

Permeability is a regulated property, not a malfunction. Alcohol and NSAIDs have the most direct evidence in people of anything on the chapter's list; most of the rest comes from animal models or observational studies.

A NOTE OF CARE

If a doctor prescribed your anti-inflammatory, for arthritis, chronic pain or any reason, don't stop it because you read a book. This count is information, and at most something to bring to your next appointment.

LAST WEEK, TWO NUMBERS

DAYS I DRANK ALCOHOL

M T W T F S S

ROUGHLY HOW MUCH

.....

TIMES I TOOK AN NSAID (ADVIL OR MOTRIN, ALEVE, ASPIRIN FOR PAIN)

M T W T F S S

WHAT FOR

.....

DO MY WORST DAYS ON THE SIGNAL MAP FALL NEAR THOSE DAYS?

.....



PART II · CHAPTER 6

When Your Microbes Eat With You

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

The fiber your ecosystem cares about is the fermentable kind, the kind your bacteria can eat.

The cells lining your colon feed mostly on butyrate, which your bacteria make.

Between 25 and 29 grams of fiber a day is the range associated with the greatest benefit.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Two New Plants · p. 25

PLATE Figure 6.5 in color · p. 26

CHAPTER 6 · THIS WEEK

Two New Plants

Add two new plants to the ones you already eat. New, not more of the same: what widens the ecosystem is variety, not volume. Two, and not ten, because speed is what causes the problem.

WHAT YOU NEED

- [ ] Your plant count from Chapter 4
- [ ] A shopping list
- [ ] Water

1 AT THE STORE



DECIDE

Choose them there

Decide on the new plant at the grocery store, not at home, because at home you cook what's there.

2 CHEAPEST



TIP

The spice rack

Oregano, cumin or paprika count the same as a vegetable in the variety tally.

3 MINIMUM



VERSION

One new plant

A handful of walnuts, a can of chickpeas, a bunch of parsley that ends up in three dishes.

4 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

Two a week, a month

Two new ones every week for a month, without dropping the earlier ones.

WHY IT WORKS STRONG

Between 25 and 29 grams of fiber a day is the range associated with the greatest benefit. The risk data are observational; the trials show lower weight, lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol.

A NOTE OF CARE

Go slow, drink water, and give it two or three weeks before judging. If you have diagnosed irritable bowel syndrome, your response to fiber is less predictable: go slowly and with support.

NOTES

PLATE · CHAPTER 6 · FIGURE 6.5

What 25 Grams Looks Like

The range with the most benefit starts at 25 grams of fiber a day. In food, not capsules, it's an ordinary day.



Breakfast	Oatmeal, 1 cup cooked	**about 4 g**
Snack	A pear, with the skin	**about 5.5 g**
Lunch	Lentils, half a cup cooked	**about 8 g**
Dinner	Broccoli, 1 cup cooked	**about 5 g**
Any time	Almonds, a small handful	**about 3.5 g**
The day		**about 26 g**

5 foods spread over a day add up to the range

3 weeks to get there, not three days: the gas of the first days is the mechanism working

> *Five ordinary foods spread over a day add up to the range. No supplement needed, and none would bring the same mix of fibers.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 6.5

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 6.5. Grams per serving from USDA FoodData Central, rounded; they vary with brand and size.

EVIDENCE STRONG

The 25-to-29-gram range comes from a series of systematic reviews and meta-analyses; the risk data are observational. Reynolds, A., et al. (2019). Carbohydrate quality and human health: A series of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. *The Lancet*, 393(10170), 434–445. doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31809-9



PART II · CHAPTER 7

Your Gut Talks to Your Brain

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

The axis isn't a cable; it's four pathways, and they work in both directions at the same time.

Most of your serotonin is made in the gut and doesn't cross the blood-brain barrier.

In humans, probiotics show a moderate effect on depressive symptoms and a small, inconsistent one on anxiety.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK One Meal Without a Screen · p. 28

SHEET Screen-Free Meals, Seven Days · p. 29

PLATE Figure 7.4 in color · p. 30

PLATE Figure 7.6 in color · p. 31

CHAPTER 7 · THIS WEEK

One Meal Without a Screen

Your brain decides how much to eat at the next meal using the memory of the last one. A screen erases that record. One meal a day with no phone, no TV and no laptop, even if it lasts eleven minutes.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ One meal a day
- ☐ A table, if you can
- ☐ The phone in another room

1 MINIMUM



VERSION

One in the week

One screen-free meal in the whole week. One.

2 MIDDLE



VERSION

One a day

One a day, whichever is easiest, which is almost never weekday lunch.

3 RESCUE



VERSION

The first three minutes

Start eating with nothing in front of you and bring the screen up at minute four.

4 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

At a table

One a day, at a table, doing nothing else. Eating standing up in the kitchen counts as a screen.

The sheet for this week is on page 29.

WHY IT WORKS STRONG

Twenty-four studies gathered in 2013: eating distracted increased intake at that meal, with a moderate effect, and considerably more at later meals.

A NOTE OF CARE

That meta-analysis is about quantity of food, not about mood. Turning off your phone at dinner is not a treatment for depression; it's the one thing in this chapter that depends entirely on you.

NOTES

CHAPTER 7 · SHEET

Screen-Free Meals, Seven Days

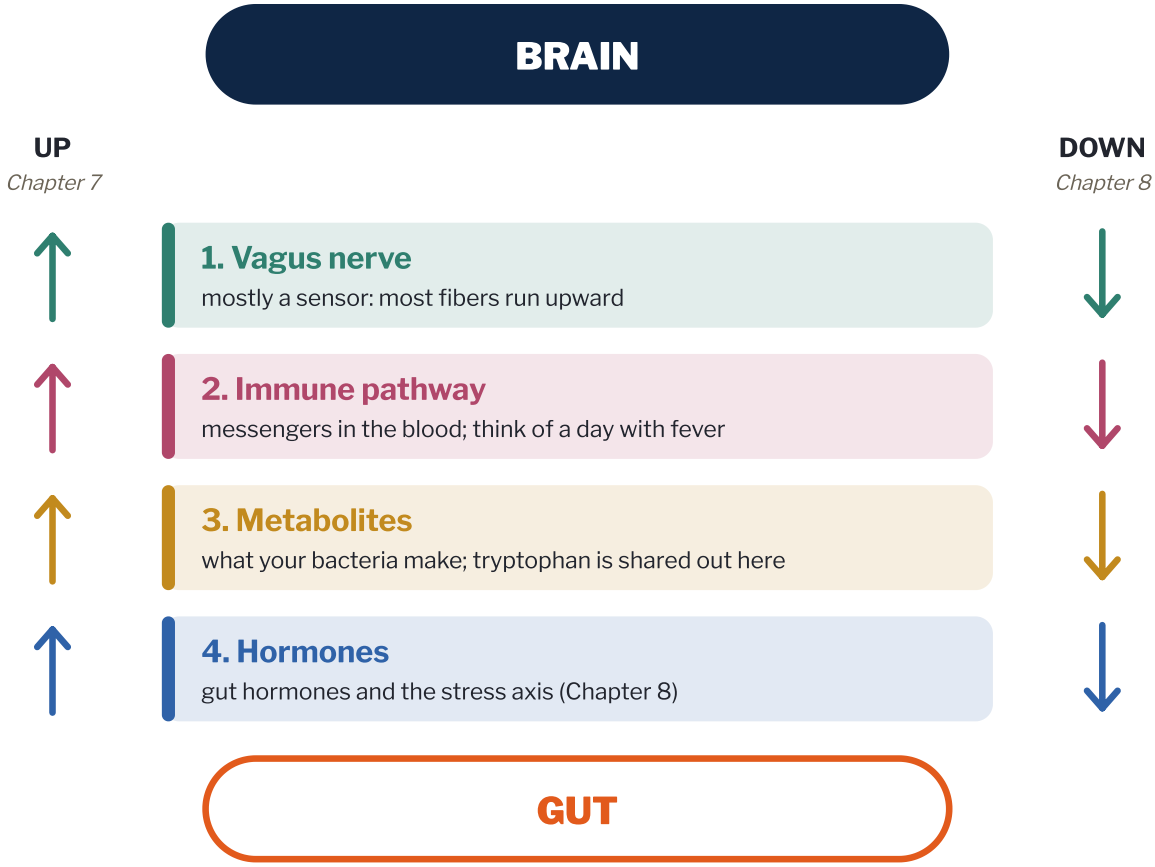
One meal a day with no phone, no TV and no laptop. Eating standing up in the kitchen counts as a screen.

	WHICH MEAL and what time	NO SCREEN whole meal · or first 3 min	AT A TABLE doing nothing else	MINUTES roughly	HOW IT WENT one line
1 DAY					
2 DAY					
3 DAY					
4 DAY					
5 DAY					
6 DAY					
7 DAY					

PLATE · CHAPTER 7 · FIGURE 7.4

Four Pathways, Both Directions

What gets called the gut-brain axis is a set of pathways along which information travels between abdomen and head, all the time and without asking you.



4 pathways working at the same time and slowly

0 single cables: none of the four is decisive on its own

> *The four pathways, in both directions. This chapter climbs up the left side; the next one comes down the right.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 7.4

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 7.4, a diagram made for the book.

EVIDENCE NO LEVEL

A diagram, not a result: the book gives each pathway its own level of evidence in the chapter. Cryan, J. F., O'Riordan, K. J., et al. (2019). The microbiota-gut-brain axis. *Physiological Reviews*, 99(4), 1877–2013. doi.org/10.1152/physrev.00018.2018

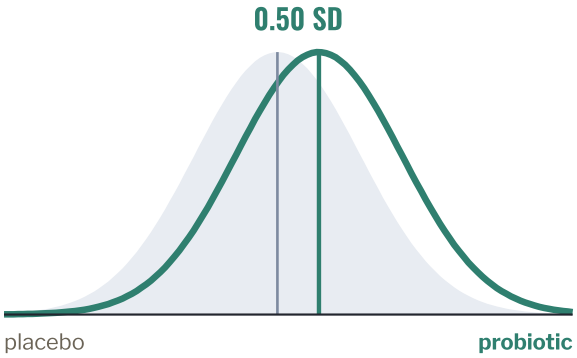
PLATE · CHAPTER 7 · FIGURE 7.6

Moderate, Small, and Shaky

A standardized mean difference measures how far apart two groups sit, using the spread of the data as the yardstick.

Depressive symptoms

SMD about −0.50: moderate by convention



Anxiety

SMD about −0.19: small, and studies disagree



Quality of the reviews behind those numbers



0.5 is a shift you can see when comparing large groups; it doesn't guarantee any one person notices

76.6% of the reviews behind those numbers were of moderate, low or critically low quality

> *Three numbers from one review. The first two are the size of the effect; the third is how much weight it can carry.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 7.6

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 7.6. Curves are schematic, drawn to the stated effect sizes.

EVIDENCE PRELIMINARY

Probiotics for mood: a promising result is not the same as a firm one. Sá Filho, A. S., et al. (2026). "Attacking" the gut-brain axis with psychobiotics: An umbrella review. *Pharmaceuticals*, 19(1), 156. doi.org/10.3390/ph19010156



PART II · CHAPTER 8

The Way Back Down

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

The stress response is two systems at different speeds: one in seconds, one that ends in cortisol.

Under acute stress, the stomach slows down and the colon speeds up.

Stress also lowers the threshold at which a normal gut signal becomes a discomfort.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK When Food Sits Worst · p. 33

SHEET When Food Sits Worst · p. 34

CHAPTER 8 · THIS WEEK

When Food Sits Worst

You can't reduce your load by decree. What you can move is the space between stress and food. This week: find the time of day food sits worst, and write down what you're doing around it.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ The log sheet
- ☐ One line a day
- ☐ Your Signal Map, if you kept it

1 EACH DAY



NOTE

The time

Identify what time of day food sits worst with you.

2 EACH DAY



NOTE

What you were doing

Not what you ate: what you were doing right before and right after. A meeting, email, fourteen minutes left, standing.

3 MINIMUM



VERSION

A single day

The meal that sits worst, with the time and one line of context.

4 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

Cross it

Cross it with the Signal Map, looking for overlaps between your worst digestions and your most crowded days.

The sheet for this week is on page 34.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

Under acute stress the stomach slows down and the colon speeds up, and stress lowers the threshold at which a normal gut signal becomes a discomfort.

A NOTE OF CARE

Don't turn this into permanent surveillance of your belly: watching your body closely increases what you feel. One line a day, and the notebook closes. Adrenal fatigue is not a diagnosis; home stress tests measure nothing useful.

NOTES

CHAPTER 8 · SHEET

When Food Sits Worst

Not what you ate: what time, and what you were doing right before and right after. One line a day.

	TIME when it sat worst	WHICH MEAL	RIGHT BEFORE a meeting, email, standing…	RIGHT AFTER	SIGNAL MAP DAY crowded? ✓
1 DAY					
2 DAY					
3 DAY					
4 DAY					
5 DAY					
6 DAY					
7 DAY					

III

PART III

Why You Can’t Keep It Up

Food that is built to be wanted, the night that decides for you, and the kitchen that decides the rest.

9 Your Brain Loves the Food Your Body Doesn’t Need 36

10 A Bad Night Decides for You 40

11 Willpower Isn’t a Muscle. It’s an Environment. 44



PART III · CHAPTER 9

Your Brain Loves the Food Your Body Doesn't Need

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

Hunger, wanting, and pleasure are three different things.

The reward system learns scenes: the couch, the hour, the pantry door.

With two diets matched on nutrients, people ate 508 more calories a day on the ultra-processed one.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK A Breakfast With Protein · p. 37

SHEET Breakfast and Midmorning Hunger · p. 38

PLATE Figure 9.4 in color · p. 39

CHAPTER 9 · THIS WEEK

A Breakfast With Protein

Observing is over: from here on, every week moves something. Change your breakfast so it includes protein, and watch your midmorning hunger.

WHAT YOU NEED

- [ ] Eggs, plain Greek yogurt or kefir, cottage cheese, leftover chicken or fish
- [ ] No powders, no grams to count
- [ ] The log sheet

1 EACH MORNING

CHANGE

Add protein

The point is for breakfast to stop being nothing but fast carbs.

2 11:30 A.M.

NOTICE

What kind of hunger

Are you hungry, and what kind of hungry? Hunger for food, or hunger for something specific?

3 MINIMUM

VERSION

Two breakfasts

Change two breakfasts this week. Two.

4 AMBITIOUS

VERSION

Five in a row

Five days in a row, compared with what used to happen.

The sheet for this week is on page 38.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

Glucose dips two or three hours after eating predict hunger and later intake, with small correlations: real and measurable in large groups, modest in any one person.

A NOTE OF CARE

This isn't about losing weight: here we measure hunger, not pounds. Don't add anything else this week. If your breakfast already has protein, just watch your midmorning hunger as it is.

NOTES

CHAPTER 9 · SHEET

Breakfast and Midmorning Hunger

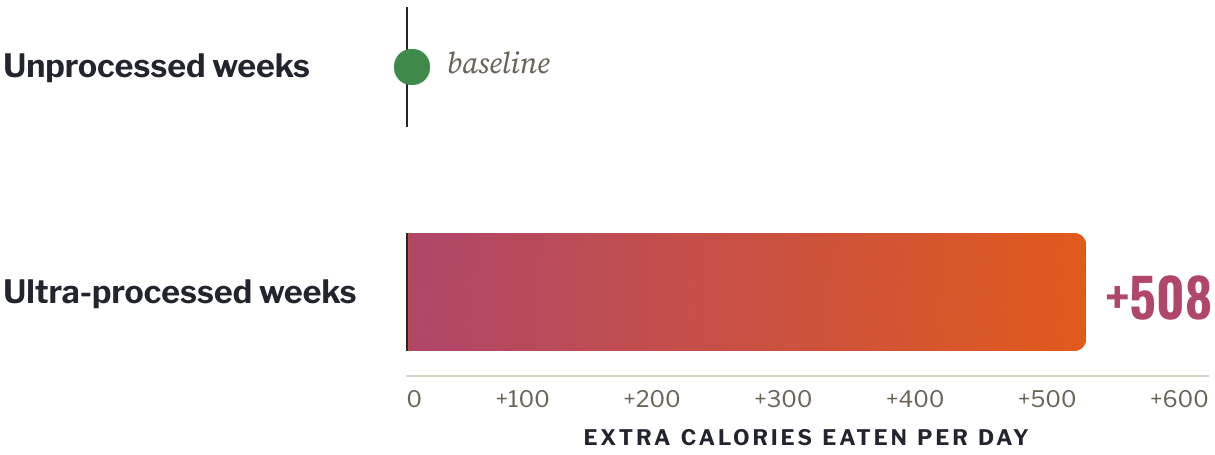
Add protein to breakfast; at 11:30 a.m., notice whether you're hungry, and what kind of hungry.

	BREAKFAST what you ate	PROTEIN eggs, yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese, leftovers	11:30 A.M. hungry? yes / no	WHAT KIND for food · for something specific
1 DAY				
2 DAY				
3 DAY				
4 DAY				
5 DAY				
6 DAY				
7 DAY				

PLATE · CHAPTER 9 · FIGURE 9.4

Same Nutrients, 508 More Calories

Two diets matched on calories offered, sugar, fat, fiber and sodium. Only the processing changed, and on the ultra-processed weeks people ate 508 more calories a day.



+2 lb in the two ultra-processed weeks (0.9 kg)

−2 lb in the two unprocessed weeks (0.9 kg)

It wasn't the sugar or the fat. Those were matched. It was speed: soft food that barely needs chewing goes in before the signal that you've had enough can arrive.

> *If you eat more of those foods, it isn't a defect of your character. Under the conditions of a controlled trial, it happens to everyone.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 9.4

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 9.4, with the trial's own numbers. Randomized inpatient trial at the NIH Clinical Center: 20 adults, two weeks on each diet. Weight changes are approximate.

EVIDENCE STRONG

Hall, K. D., et al. (2019). Ultra-processed diets cause excess calorie intake and weight gain. *Cell Metabolism*, 30(1), 67–77. doi.org/10.1016/j.cmet.2019.05.008



PART III · CHAPTER 10

A Bad Night Decides for You

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

After a short night, people ate an average of 385 more calories a day.

The push goes up and the brake goes down at the same time.

The clock gets set by the morning, not the night.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK The Same Wake-Up Time · p. 41

SHEET Wake-Up Time, Two Weeks · p. 42

PLATE Figure 10.2 in color · p. 43

CHAPTER 10 · THIS WEEK

The Same Wake-Up Time

Getting up is a voluntary action and falling asleep isn't, so the rule goes where you have control. Your wake-up time, with the light that follows it, is what sets the clock.

WHAT YOU NEED

- [ ] An alarm set for the real time
- [ ] No snooze cushion
- [ ] The log sheet

1 7 DAYS



RULE

Same time

Get up at the same time seven days in a row, with half an hour of margin at most. Bedtime, free.

2 MINIMUM



VERSION

Five weekdays

Five weekdays at the same time, leaving the weekend free.

3 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

Add light

Seven days, plus ten minutes of natural light within the first hour of getting up.

4 NEXT WEEK



MEASURE

When you get sleepy

Don't measure how much you sleep this week, but what time you start getting sleepy next week.

The sheet for this week is on page 42.

WHY IT WORKS STRONG

A fixed wake-up time is part of what sleep clinics use to treat insomnia without pills. Stimulus control and sleep restriction are the pieces the clinical guideline strongly recommends.

A NOTE OF CARE

The first week you'll probably sleep worse; it passes. This rule is too small if you've had real insomnia for years, snore hard or doze off in the day, work nights or rotating shifts, take something to sleep, or your mood has been low for weeks. Ask for professional help.

NOTES

CHAPTER 10 · SHEET

Wake-Up Time, Two Weeks

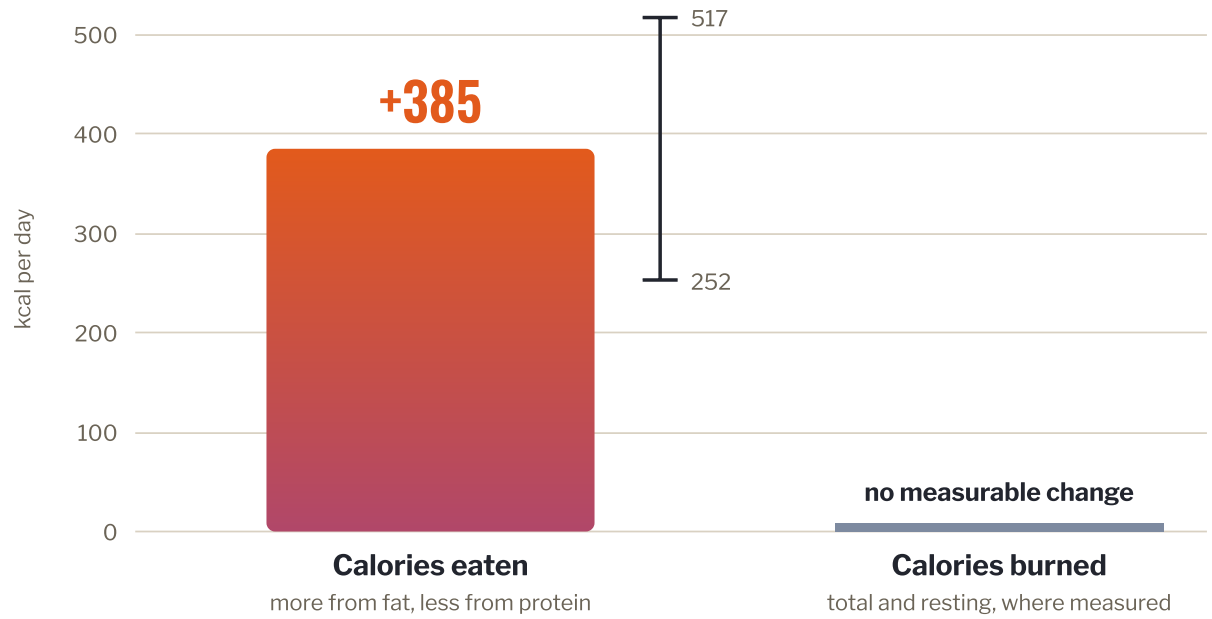
My wake-up time _____ Seven days, half an hour of margin at most. Bedtime, free.

	UP AT actual time	WITHIN 30 MIN ✓	MORNING LIGHT 10 min, first hour ✓	WEEK 2 · SLEEPY AT when you started getting sleepy
1 DAY				
2 DAY				
3 DAY				
4 DAY				
5 DAY				
6 DAY				
7 DAY				

PLATE · CHAPTER 10 · FIGURE 10.2

A Short Night, About 385 More Calories

Change per day after partial sleep restriction. Eleven studies, 172 people, combined in one meta-analysis.



+385 calories eaten per day, with a 95 percent interval of 252 to 517

±0 calories burned: no measurable change where it was measured

> *More comes in and, as far as anyone has measured, no more goes out. The night before changes the menu as well as the amount.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 10.2

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 10.2 with the meta-analysis's own numbers. The thin line marks the 95 percent confidence interval.

EVIDENCE STRONG

Meta-analysis of trials. Al Khatib, H. K., et al. (2017). The effects of partial sleep deprivation on energy balance. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition,* 71(5), 614–624. doi.org/10.1038/ejcn.2016.201



PART III · CHAPTER 11

Willpower Isn’t a Muscle. It’s an Environment.

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

A habit is a behavior that repetition in a stable context has made automatic.

The measured median to the plateau of automaticity was sixty-six days, with wide variation.

Missing a day had no appreciable effect. The damage is done by what you decide after the miss.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Remove One Friction · p. 45

PLATE Figure 11.2 in color · p. 46

CHAPTER 11 · THIS WEEK

Remove One Friction

You can't change your character this afternoon. You can change your kitchen. Pick one friction and remove it. Just one, and nothing else all week.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ The scene you already know: the hour, the room
- ☐ Four minutes
- ☐ Nothing to buy

1 FIRST



FIND

The scene

What state is the behavior closing, and where does the scene start? The couch, the phone, around nine.

2 THEN



MOVE

The easiest link

Almost never the pantry. Usually the one before: three more steps, the table cleared, the kitchen light off.

3 MINIMUM



VERSION

One friction

The most obvious one, and nothing else all week.

4 MIDDLE



VERSION

One out, one in

One friction removed and one added, in opposite directions.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

A habit is repetition in a stable context, and a behavior needs capability, opportunity and motivation at once. Motivation is the one that evaporates when you've got the day on your shoulders.

A NOTE OF CARE

If it stops working in two weeks, don't go back to willpower: look for what changed in the context. And don't wait for Monday. If your friction can be removed this afternoon in four minutes, remove it this afternoon.

ONE FRICTION

THE SCENE: THE HOUR, THE ROOM, THE STATE

THE LINK I'M MOVING

REMOVED ON (DATE AND TIME)

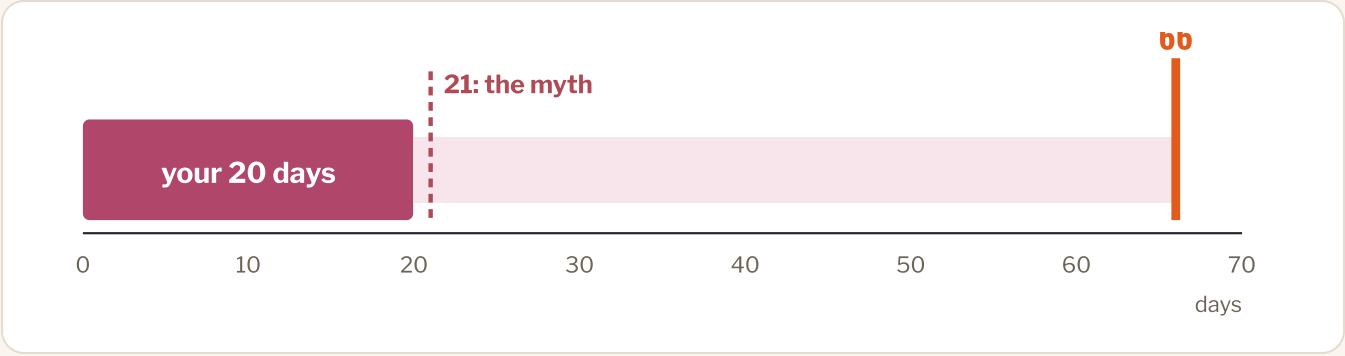
MIDDLE LEVEL · ONE I'M ADDING, IN THE OTHER DIRECTION

TWO WEEKS LATER: WHAT CHANGED IN THE CONTEXT?

PLATE · CHAPTER 11 · FIGURE 11.2

66, Not 21

Participants repeated a new behavior every day and rated each day how automatic it felt. Then the team measured when it leveled off.



66 median days until a new daily behavior stops feeling like effort, with wide variation

1 miss doesn't count: missing one opportunity did not appreciably affect habit formation

> *Stopping on day twenty isn't failing at the end: it's leaving at the first third.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 11.2

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 11.2. The figure of 21 days does not come from this literature.

EVIDENCE MODERATE

One real-life study. Lally, P., van Jaarsveld, C. H. M., Potts, H. W. W., & Wardle, J. (2010). How are habits formed. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(6), 998–1009.

IV

PART IV

Before You Change Anything

What the internet told you, and when a notebook closes and an appointment opens.

12 What the Internet Told You About Your Gut 48

13 When to See a Doctor, and What to Ask 51



PART IV · CHAPTER 12

What the Internet Told You About Your Gut

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

No randomized controlled trial assesses commercial detox diets in humans.

A supplement is not a drug: the FDA doesn't approve it for safety or effectiveness before it's sold.

The five beliefs share a format: one thing, purchasable, fast-acting. The format is what fails.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Your Supplement Inventory · p. 49

SHEET Supplement Inventory · p. 50

CHAPTER 12 · THIS WEEK

Your Supplement Inventory

This chapter doesn't ask you to throw anything out. It asks for an inventory: every supplement you take, what you expected it to do, and who or what recommended it.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Every bottle in the house
- ☐ The inventory sheet
- ☐ The monthly cost, if you know it

1 EACH BOTTLE

WRITE

What you expected

What you expected it to do, in a few words.

2 EACH BOTTLE

WRITE

Who recommended it

A doctor, a friend, an ad, an article, a store.

3 MINIMUM

VERSION

Count and add

Count them and add up what they cost per month. That alone changes conversations.

4 AMBITIOUS

VERSION

Bring it along

Save the list for your next appointment. It connects directly with Chapter 13.

The sheet for this week is on page 50.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

With FODMAPs reduced, gluten produced no specific effect in people who believed they were sensitive to it without being celiac. They weren't making it up: they had the wrong culprit.

A NOTE OF CARE

Supplements a doctor prescribed for a specific reason stay, and don't get touched without talking to whoever prescribed them, especially iron, vitamin D, B12, or anything correcting a measured deficiency.

NOTES

CHAPTER 12 · SHEET

Supplement Inventory

Every bottle in the house. This chapter doesn't ask you to throw anything out.

	PRODUCT name on the bottle	WHAT I EXPECTED IT TO DO in a few words	WHO RECOMMENDED IT doctor, friend, ad, article, store	PRESCRIBED? for a reason	PER MONTH $
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

TOTAL PER MONTH

Supplements a doctor prescribed for a reason stay, and don't get touched without talking to whoever prescribed them. Bring this list to your next appointment.



PART IV · CHAPTER 13

When to See a Doctor, and What to Ask

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

Eight signs don't allow for wait-and-see.

Colorectal cancer screening is recommended from 45 to 75. If nobody has mentioned it, you mention it.

Never cut out gluten before celiac disease has been looked into.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Before the Appointment · p. 52

SHEET Before the Appointment (two pages) · p. 53

CHAPTER 13 · THIS WEEK

Before the Appointment

This book lives in the gap between being sick and being well. Outside that gap, listen to someone else. Go over the alarm signs, and if you're 45 or older, ask about screening.

WHAT YOU NEED

- [ ] The appointment sheet
- [ ] Your Signal Map or four lines
- [ ] Your supplement inventory

1 TODAY

CHECK

The eight signs

If you check any of them, make the appointment, and come back to the book afterward.

2 45 OR OLDER

ASK

Screening

"Am I due for colorectal screening?" Most plans cover it as preventive care; call to confirm.

3 BEFORE YOU GO

WRITE

Four lines

What exactly, since when, what makes it worse or better, what you've already tried.

4 IN THE ROOM

ASK

Open questions

Not a list of tests to demand: open questions that improve the conversation.

The sheet for this week is on page 53.

WHY IT WORKS STRONG

Colorectal cancer screening is recommended for everyone from 45 to 75, with a stool test at home or a colonoscopy as the main options.

A NOTE OF CARE

Don't stop a prescribed medication because a book got you thinking. Don't cut out gluten on your own if you suspect celiac disease. And don't change anything big before you're seen.

NOTES

CHAPTER 13 · SHEET

Before the Appointment

THE EIGHT SIGNS THAT DON'T ALLOW FOR WAIT-AND-SEE

- ☐ **Losing weight without trying** — even a few pounds, and even if you welcome them
- ☐ **Anemia** — or a low iron level in bloodwork with no clear explanation
- ☐ **Symptoms that wake you at night** — pain or diarrhea that interrupts sleep
- ☐ **Starting after fifty** — when nothing like it happened before
- ☐ **Blood** — in your stool, or stools that are black like tar
- ☐ **Trouble swallowing** — difficulty or pain, or food that feels stuck
- ☐ **Repeated vomiting or fever** — along with the digestive symptoms
- ☐ **Family history** — a parent, sibling or child with digestive cancer, IBD or celiac disease

If you checked any of them, put the book down, make the appointment, and come back afterward. None of them means you have something serious; they belong to things that get checked rather than observed.

NOT AN APPOINTMENT: THE ER, TODAY

Severe abdominal pain that comes on suddenly and doesn't let up. Vomiting blood. Black stools with dizziness or weakness. A belly that swells and goes hard while you can't pass gas or stool, with vomiting. High fever with intense abdominal pain. Not sure? Call the nurse advice line on the back of your insurance card. If you're wondering about 911, call 911.

45 TO 75 · SCREENING — STRONG

Colorectal cancer screening is recommended for everyone from 45 to 75: a stool test at home every year, a stool DNA test every one to three years, or a colonoscopy every ten. Which one is a conversation with your doctor; that you do one of them is not.

☐ **I'm under 45** ☐ **I'm 45 or older: ask "Am I due for colorectal screening?"**

APPOINTMENT

Date _____ With _____ Plan: HMO / PPO / other _____

What to Bring, What to Ask

FOUR LINES · YOU CAN TYPE THEM IN THE WAITING ROOM

1. What exactly
the most specific word you have: bloating isn't pain, or heaviness, or gas

2. Since when
an approximate date: since spring, since I changed jobs

3. Worse and better
times of day, meals, heavy weeks at work, the weekend

4. Already tried
what you tried and what happened: supplements, foods cut out, and since when

OPEN QUESTIONS, NOT A LIST OF TESTS

- [ ] "What do you think is most likely going on?"
- [ ] "Is there anything you'd want to rule out, and what would it take to rule it out?"
- [ ] "If this doesn't improve in a few weeks, when should I come back?"
- [ ] "Is there anything I'm doing on my own that you think is unnecessary or getting in the way?"

And if you didn't understand: *"I didn't follow what you said. Could you explain it again?"* The patient portal works too: a two-line message about a result usually gets answered in a day or two.

LOGISTICS, NOT MEDICINE

- [ ] HMO: do I need a referral from primary care?
- [ ] Does the test need prior authorization?
- [ ] What is the visit likely to cost?
- [ ] For food: a registered dietitian, RD or RDN after the name

THREE THINGS, SAID PLAINLY

Don't stop a prescribed medication because a book got you thinking. Don't cut out gluten on your own if you suspect celiac disease: it can make the tests come back negative. And don't change anything big before you're seen.

V

PART V

The Groundwork Method

Five levers that act at the same time: Recognize, Rebalance, Settle, Train and Sustain.

14 Recognize 56

15 Rebalance 59

16 Settle 63

17 Train 67

18 Sustain 71



PART V · CHAPTER 14

Recognize

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

The method has five levers and isn't a sequence.

Without a baseline you won't know whether you've improved, or what it was that worked.

One signal, not five.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK One Signal, Thirty Days · p. 57

SHEET One Signal, Thirty Days · p. 58

CHAPTER 14 · THIS WEEK

One Signal, Thirty Days

Without a baseline you won't know whether you've improved, and your memory of how you were rewrites itself. Pick a signal, give it a score from zero to ten, and write it down today.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ One signal: the one that most spoils your day
- ☐ The 30-day log
- ☐ Thirty seconds a day, same time

1 TODAY



CHOOSE

One signal

Midafternoon energy, bloating after eating, sleep quality or mental clarity work best.

2 MINIMUM



VERSION

One score a day

One signal, one score a day, thirty days. Nothing else.

3 MIDDLE



VERSION

Plus one word

The score plus one word of context on the days far outside the usual.

4 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

Plus what you did

A second column with what you did differently that day. Context, not a second signal.

The sheet for this week is on page 58.

WHY IT WORKS PRELIMINARY

No trial shows that one signal beats five. It's a reasoning from what we know about self-monitoring, hypervigilance and dropout, and the book says so on purpose.

A NOTE OF CARE

If after thirty days the line is flat and low, or an alarm sign shows up, this method isn't your path. Nor is it the tool if an anxiety or a sadness takes up most of the day: that gets worked on with help.

NOTES

CHAPTER 14 · SHEET

One Signal, Thirty Days

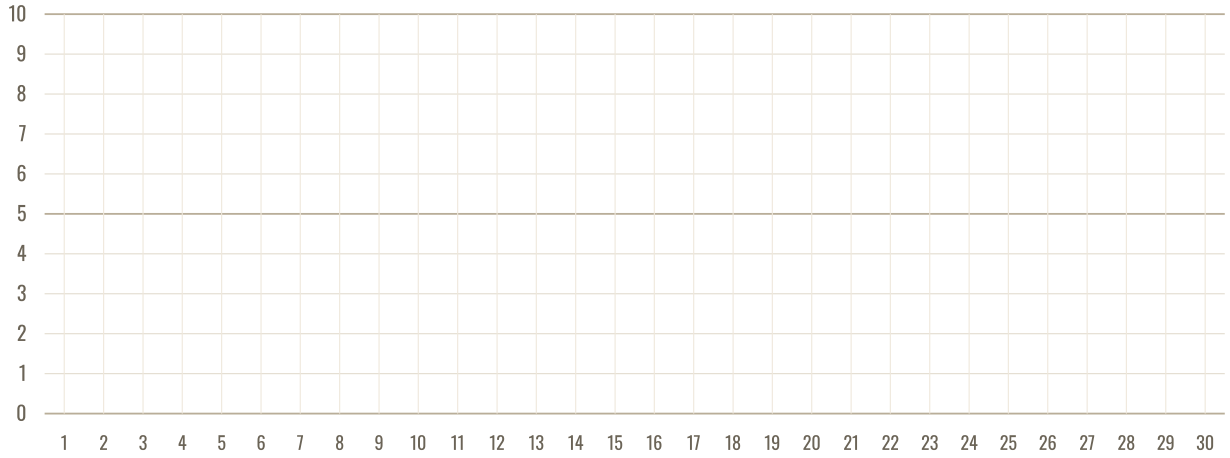
One signal, one score a day, same time. Thirty seconds.

MY ONE SIGNAL

SAME TIME EVERY DAY

DAY 1 IS

SCORE 0 TO 10 · ONE DOT A DAY



MIDDLE LEVEL · ONE WORD ON THE DAYS FAR OUTSIDE THE USUAL · AMBITIOUS · WHAT YOU DID DIFFERENTLY

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18
19	20	21
22	23	24
25	26	27
28	29	30



PART V · CHAPTER 15

Rebalance

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

Rebalance is adding, not removing.

Thirty types of plants a week is a practical target and an order of magnitude, not a passing grade.

With ultra-processed foods the strategy is to substitute, not forbid.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK The Thirty-Plant Rule · p. 60

SHEET Plant Count, One Week · p. 61

PLATE Figure 15.3 in color · p. 62

CHAPTER 15 · THIS WEEK

The Thirty-Plant Rule

You don’t have to stop eating anything. You have to start eating more things. Week one you count; from week two you go up two at a time, without removing anything.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ The plant count sheet
- ☐ Two cans of beans, frozen vegetables, a new spice
- ☐ Patience with dinners out

1 WEEK 1

COUNT

Your number

Count again and compare with Chapter 4. Higher or lower, both are information.

2 WEEK 2 ON

ADD

Two more a week

Two new plants each week on top of the first week’s count.

3 MINIMUM

VERSION

Count and stay

Count one week and stay there this month.

4 AMBITIOUS

VERSION

A fermented food

Plus one daily serving of something fermented, starting with a spoonful and not a glass.

The sheet for this week is on page 61.

WHY IT WORKS PRELIMINARY

Ten weeks of a diet rich in fermented foods increased diversity and lowered nineteen inflammatory proteins, in a small trial. Thirty plants comes from an observational study: an order of magnitude, not a passing grade.

A NOTE OF CARE

Fermented foods aren’t for everyone: if your immune system is compromised, you’re in cancer treatment, or your doctor has said something, check first. One meal out doesn’t move a seven-day tally.

NOTES

CHAPTER 15 · SHEET

Plant Count, One Week

Week of _____ Count again, then go up two at a time, without removing anything.

What counts: Vegetables · Fruit · Legumes · Whole grains · Nuts · Seeds · Herbs · Spices. Each different plant counts once: chickpeas eaten three times are one; two apples of different varieties are two.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40

DIFFERENT PLANTS THIS WEEK ☐

Don't compare your number with anyone else's, and don't turn it into a grade. A low number only means there's room.

CHAPTER 15 · TWO AT A TIME

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
Your count	Count + 2	Count + 4	Count + 6

PLATE · CHAPTER 15 · FIGURE 15.3

Ten Weeks, Two Diets

Stanford, 2021. 36 healthy adults, assigned at random to eat more fermented foods or more fiber for ten weeks.

	MORE FERMENTED FOODS	MORE FIBER
Microbiome diversity	**went up** more, the bigger the servings	*held steady on average*
19 inflammatory proteins in blood	**went down**	*did not move*
Immune cell activation	**lower in 4 types**	*no consistent change*

Sooner fermented foods acted within the ten weeks

Deeper fiber hadn't failed; it hadn't started yet: the community didn't yet have enough bacteria to break it down

> *Fermented foods act sooner and fiber acts deeper. In a plan measured in months you need both.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 15.3

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 15.3, with the trial's own outcomes.

EVIDENCE MODERATE

One randomized trial, 36 adults. Wastyk, H. C., et al. (2021). Gut-microbiota-targeted diets modulate human immune status. *Cell*, 184(16), 4137–4153. doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2021.06.019



PART V · CHAPTER 16

Settle

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

Settle is bringing activation down before you get to bed.

Voluntary slow breathing raises heart rate variability. It isn't a trick: it gets trained.

Sleep hygiene alone isn't a treatment for chronic insomnia.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK The Ten-Minute Pause · p. 64

SHEET The Pause, Four Weeks · p. 65

PLATE Figure 16.6 in color · p. 66

CHAPTER 16 · THIS WEEK

The Ten-Minute Pause

Ten minutes of pause dissolve into the day unless they have an hour, a place and content. That's why this week starts by writing the hour down.

WHAT YOU NEED

- [ ] An hour with an anchor: after dinner, after school pickup
- [ ] No screen
- [ ] The pause log

1 TODAY

CHOOSE

The hour

Choose an hour that already exists in your day and has an anchor in front of it. Write it down.

2 MINIMUM

VERSION

Ten minutes

Ten minutes a day, same time, no screen. Nothing more.

3 MIDDLE

VERSION

Breathe 4 and 6

Inside those ten minutes, five of slow breathing: in for four, out for six.

4 AMBITIOUS

VERSION

Outside, with someone

The ten minutes outside the house, and once a week with someone.

The sheet for this week is on page 65.

WHY IT WORKS STRONG

Across 223 studies, voluntary slow breathing raises vagally mediated heart rate variability during the practice, after one session and after several weeks.

A NOTE OF CARE

Slow breathing doesn't de-inflame, and the vagus nerve doesn't switch on at will. If you feel lightheaded, shorten the count. A missed day doesn't get made up in double.

NOTES

CHAPTER 16 · SHEET

The Pause, Four Weeks

Ten minutes need an hour, a place and content, or they dissolve into the day.

MY HOUR

.....

HOOKED TO (WHAT ALREADY HAPPENS JUST BEFORE)

.....

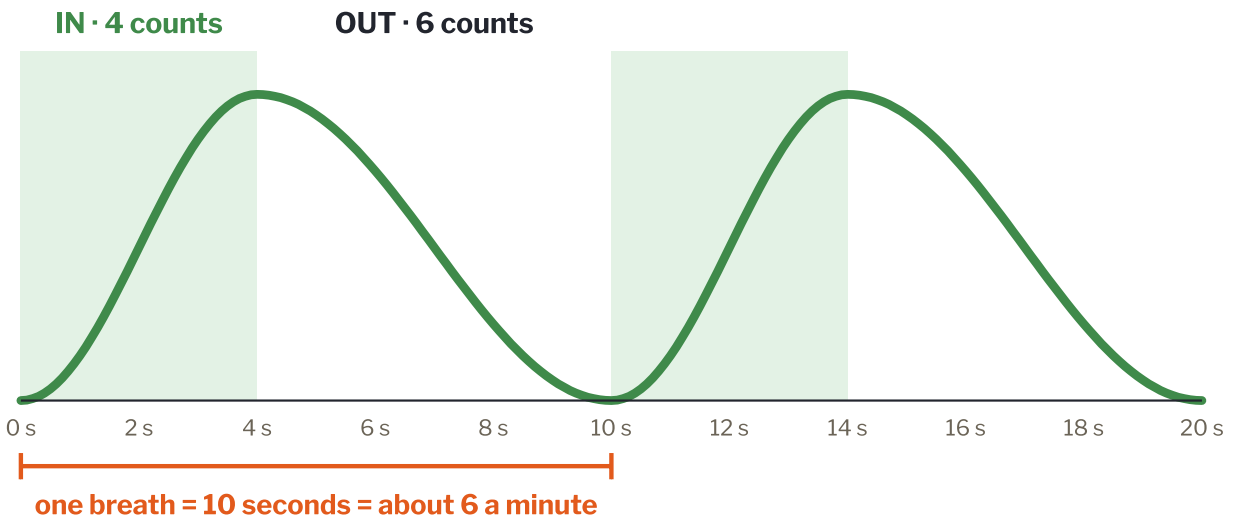
	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	NOTE one word, if any
1 WEEK	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	
2 WEEK	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	
3 WEEK	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	
4 WEEK	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	☐ 4·6 ☐	

Big box: ten minutes, same time, no screen. **Small box (middle level):** five of them breathing in for four and out for six. A missed day doesn't get made up in double. If you feel lightheaded, shorten the count.

PLATE · CHAPTER 16 · FIGURE 16.6

Four In, Six Out

A longer out-breath than in-breath, about six breaths a minute. No app, nothing to measure.



5 min inside your ten-minute pause, hung on an hour you already have

Shorter if you feel lightheaded, shorten the count: there's no prize for breathing slower

> *The middle level of the week: the same ten minutes, and five of them like this.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 16.6

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 16.6. The counts come from the text of Chapter 16.

EVIDENCE STRONG

Slow breathing raises heart rate variability: 223 studies. Laborde, S., et al. (2022). Effects of voluntary slow breathing on heart rate and heart rate variability. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 138, 104711. doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2022.104711



PART V · CHAPTER 17

Train

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

Exercise changes who's in there more than how many types there are.

The benefit is rented and gets paid for every week.

The best-established part of movement isn't microbial: it's insulin sensitivity, sleep, and mood.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Your Minimum Viable Week · p. 68

SHEET Your Minimum Viable Week · p. 69

PLATE Figure 17.3 in color · p. 70

CHAPTER 17 · THIS WEEK

Your Minimum Viable Week

The week you decide is the one you're going to do. Write it in one line, with specific days and times. "Exercise more" doesn't work.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Comfortable shoes
- ☐ A chair for strength work
- ☐ The week planner

1 MINIMUM



VERSION

Ten after dinner

Ten minutes of walking after dinner, three days a week, and getting up from the chair every long half hour.

2 MIDDLE



VERSION

Add strength

Plus two twenty-minute strength sessions: push, pull, get up from a chair. Body weight first.

3 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

Add intensity

Plus one day with four sets of one hard minute and two of recovery.

4 TODAY



WRITE

One sentence

Monday, Wednesday and Friday I walk ten minutes after dinner. That sentence is the whole chapter.

The sheet for this week is on page 69.

WHY IT WORKS STRONG

The best-established part of movement isn't microbial: it's insulin sensitivity, sleep and mood. Breaking up long sitting lowers glucose and insulin after eating. The microbiome part is preliminary.

A NOTE OF CARE

If you have a known heart condition, or haven't raised your heart rate in years, the high-intensity level gets checked with a doctor first.

NOTES

CHAPTER 17 · SHEET

Your Minimum Viable Week

The week you decide is the one you're going to do. "Exercise more" doesn't work.

MY WEEK, IN ONE SENTENCE, WITH DAYS AND TIMES

Example from the book: Monday, Wednesday and Friday I walk ten minutes after dinner.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
WEEK 1							
Walk 10 min after dinner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Up from the chair every long half hour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strength, 20 min middle · 2 days	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Four hard minutes ambitious · 1 day	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
WEEK 2							
Walk 10 min after dinner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Up from the chair every long half hour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strength, 20 min middle · 2 days	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Four hard minutes ambitious · 1 day	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you have a known heart condition, or haven't raised your heart rate in years, the high-intensity level gets checked with a doctor first.

PLATE · CHAPTER 17 · FIGURE 17.3

Rented, Not Bought

University of Illinois, 2018. 32 adults who didn't move, followed through twelve weeks: six training, six sitting again.



Schematic: numbered circles are the three stool samples, not measured values.

1 → 2 three days a week, 30 to 60 minutes; short-chain fatty acids in stool rose in the lean adults

2 → 3 six weeks without training and the changes in the microbiota largely reversed

> *The microbial benefit of movement gets paid for every week.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 17.3

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 17.3. Schematic, not measured values. Diet was controlled for three days before each sample.

EVIDENCE PRELIMINARY

32 people, no control group. Allen, J. M., et al. (2018). Exercise alters gut microbiota composition and function in lean and obese humans. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*, 50(4), 747–757. doi.org/10.1249/MSS.0000000000001495



PART V · CHAPTER 18

Sustain

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

There's no magic number of days. The average describes almost nobody.

The damage isn't the odd day; it's what you tell yourself afterward.

Implementation intentions move the decision to a moment when you decide well.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Three If-Then Plans · p. 72

SHEET Three If-Then Cards · p. 73

PLATE Figure 18.2 in color · p. 74

CHAPTER 18 · THIS WEEK

Three If-Then Plans

An implementation intention has the form "if X happens, then I do Y." It moves the decision to a moment when you decide well.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ The cut-out cards
- ☐ The three moments you know go sideways
- ☐ What's already in the house

1 MINIMUM

VERSION

One intention

One, for the most fragile moment you already know about, written where you'll see it.

2 MIDDLE

VERSION

Three intentions

One for each front you're working on. Check that each response can be carried out today.

3 AMBITIOUS

VERSION

Tell one person

Not to police you, but so the plan exists outside your head.

4 THIS MONTH

RULE

Add nothing new

Not a food, not a session, not an app. This month, you only repeat.

The sheet for this week is on page 73.

WHY IT WORKS STRONG

Across 94 studies, implementation intentions showed an effect of 0.65 on goal attainment. The best-backed tool in the chapter, and even so its effect is medium, not total.

A NOTE OF CARE

An intention that depends on something that doesn't exist yet isn't a plan; it's a wish with the grammar of a plan. If you write all three and keep none, the lines are still good next week.

NOTES

CHAPTER 18 · SHEET

Three If-Then Cards

If X happens, then I do Y. One card for each front you're working on.

Cut along the dashed lines and keep each card where the moment happens: the fridge door, the car, the phone case.

FRONT 1 · _____ 1

If _____

_____

then I _____

_____

☐ The response can be carried out today, with what's already in the house.

FRONT 2 · _____ 2

If _____

_____

then I _____

_____

☐ The response can be carried out today, with what's already in the house.

FRONT 3 · _____ 3

If _____

_____

then I _____

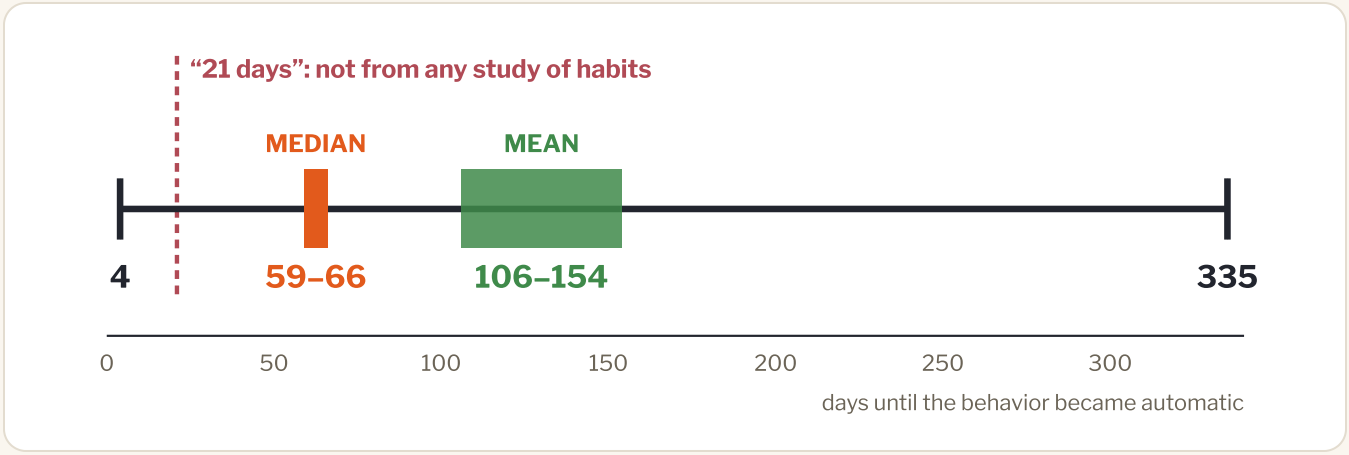
_____

☐ The response can be carried out today, with what's already in the house.

PLATE · CHAPTER 18 · FIGURE 18.2

From Four Days to Almost a Year

A systematic review with meta-analysis, 2024: 20 studies and 2,601 participants. Four of them reported the time to reach automaticity.



Chosen habits people picked themselves came out stronger than those assigned from outside

Morning practices generally showed greater habit strength: fewer surprises cross your path

> *The average describes almost nobody. The question "how long does it take" has no answer that will serve you.*
>
> FROM THE BOOK, FIGURE 18.2

HOW IT WAS MADE

Redrawn in color from Figure 18.2, days to scale. The range of means and medians comes from four studies.

EVIDENCE MODERATE

20 studies, many at high risk of bias. Singh, B., Murphy, A., Maher, C., & Smith, A. E. (2024). Time to form a habit. *Healthcare*, 12(23), 2488. doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12232488

VI

PART VI

Getting Started

Thirty days to start, and what to do the day it breaks.

19 Thirty Days to Start 76

20 When You Slip 79



PART VI · CHAPTER 19

Thirty Days to Start

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

Thirty days give you time to install a context and find out which lever is yours.

One new entry a week, and what came before doesn't get dropped.

Week four adds nothing and decides the most.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK Day One · p. 77

SHEET The Four Weeks · p. 78

CHAPTER 19 · THIS WEEK

Day One

Monday doesn't have to be perfect. It has to exist. Write the date of day one and fill out the Signal Map dated today.

WHAT YOU NEED

- [ ] The four-week calendar
- [ ] A fresh Signal Map
- [ ] Where You Are Now, filled today

1 TODAY



WRITE

Day one

A plan without a start date is an intention.

2 MINIMUM



VERSION

Week one, four times

The map and the pause, nothing else, for a whole month.

3 MIDDLE



VERSION

The calendar

One new entry a week, and the fourth with nothing added.

4 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

Plus strength

One twenty-minute strength session from week two, and the Signal Map again on day fifteen.

The sheet for this week is on page 78.

WHY IT WORKS PRELIMINARY

Staggered change hasn't been shown to beat simultaneous change. The book chooses it for capacity: the first repetitions of any habit are the expensive ones.

A NOTE OF CARE

Nothing gets resolved in thirty days, and results don't arrive in a straight line. If a week collapses, you repeat it: the calendar has four entries, not four dates. Don't start with food on day one.

NOTES

CHAPTER 19 · SHEET

The Four Weeks

One new entry a week, and what came before doesn't get dropped.

DAY ONE IS

MY LEVEL

☐ Minimum ☐ Middle ☐ Ambitious

Week 1

The Signal Map, dated today. The ten-minute pause, same time, no screen. You don't touch food.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

Week 2

Movement comes in: ten minutes of walking after dinner, three days, and up from the chair every long half hour.

8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐

Week 3

Plants come in: count last week's, then two more. Nothing gets removed.

15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐

Week 4

Nothing comes in. You repeat, and you write the three if-then plans and the two-missed-days sentence.

22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐

Minimum: week one, four times. **Middle:** the calendar as written. **Ambitious:** plus one twenty-minute strength session from week two, and the Signal Map again on day fifteen. If a week collapses, you repeat it: the calendar has four entries, not four dates.



PART VI · CHAPTER 20

When You Slip

THE CHAPTER IN THREE LINES

A slip is an episode and a relapse is the full return to the pattern.

You resume; you don't restart.

The protocol is three days: one question, one thing put back, one sentence written.

IN THIS WORKBOOK

THIS WEEK The Two-Missed-Days Sentence · p. 80

SHEET The 72-Hour Protocol · p. 81

CHAPTER 20 · THIS WEEK

The Two-Missed-Days Sentence

Write now, while things are going well, what you'll do the first time you miss two days in a row. A plan written in advance turns a moment about identity into a three-day errand.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ One sentence with a concrete action
- ☐ A place you'll find it
- ☐ The 72-hour protocol

1 MINIMUM



VERSION

One sentence

Written today, with a concrete action inside it.

2 MIDDLE



VERSION

The protocol

The 72-hour protocol written out in full, kept where you'll find it without searching.

3 AMBITIOUS



VERSION

One person

Someone in front of whom resuming is a Tuesday and not a confession.

4 IF IT HAPPENED



START

First 24 hours

What changed in my context? Write it in one line before you close the book.

The sheet for this week is on page 81.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

Skipping a day had no long-term cost in the study that measured it. Across 94 studies, self-compassion was associated with more caretaking behaviors, with small to medium effects.

A NOTE OF CARE

Self-compassion doesn't replace the plan. And this protocol is for health habits: an addiction gets treated with professional help.

NOTES

CHAPTER 20 · SHEET

The 72-Hour Protocol

Designed to be done badly, in a hurry and without wanting to, which is how it's going to get done.

WRITE IT NOW, WHILE THINGS ARE GOING WELL

The first time I miss two days in a row, I will

First 24 hours

One question: not "what's wrong with me," but "what changed in my context?" Write it in one line.

Second 24 hours

Put one thing back. The smallest: the pause or the ten minutes of walking. One, tomorrow, at its usual hour.

Third 24 hours

Write what it would have taken for this not to happen, and turn it into an if-then for next time.

An example from the book. Eleven days without walking or the pause, after a trip. Day one: what changed was the trip and the catch-up week, not your character. Day two: tomorrow after dinner, ten minutes out. Day three: if I'm away four days again, the first day back I walk ten minutes even if I don't feel like it. Three sentences and a walk.

WHAT WOULD I SAY TO SOMEONE I LOVE WHO TOLD ME EXACTLY THIS?

AMBITIOUS · THE ONE PERSON I'LL LET KNOW

You resume; you don't restart. Nothing to make up, nothing to compensate for, no waiting for Monday. This protocol is for health habits: an addiction gets treated with professional help.

NOT IN THE BOOK · BUILT FROM IT

Beyond the Book

Four exercises the book doesn't print but makes possible. Each one combines tools from two or three chapters, says which, and carries the lowest seal among the chapters it borrows from. Nothing new is claimed here.

A Pantry and Fridge Audit 83
Built from Chapters 4, 6 and 15

Your Food-and-Signal Map 85
Built from Chapters 3, 8 and 14

The Headline Card 87
Built from Chapters 2 and 12

A Thirty-Day Plan 89
Built from Chapters 14, 19 and 20

A Pantry and Fridge Audit

Variety gets decided at the store and stored at home: the plants that aren't in the house on Sunday don't show up on Wednesday. Before adding anything, take stock of what's already there.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Fifteen minutes and the sheet
- ☐ Pantry, fridge, freezer, spice rack
- ☐ Nothing to throw out

1 15 MIN



LOOK

Open every door

Write down every different plant you find. Each type counts once, as in Chapter 4.

2 SAME DAY



COUNT

The cheap ones too

Canned beans, frozen vegetables and spices count the same as fresh ones in the variety tally (Chapters 6 and 19).

3 SAME DAY



PAIR

Swap, don't ban

Next to each ultra-processed item you reach for most, write a substitute you'd actually eat (Chapter 15).

4 NEXT SHOP



ADD

Two new plants

Put two plants that aren't in the house on the list. Decide them at the store, not at home (Chapter 6).

The sheet for this week is on page 84.

WHY IT WORKS PRELIMINARY

The thirty-plant tally rests on an observational study, and substituting rather than forbidding is the strategy the book argues in Chapter 15. This exercise only applies them to your kitchen; it carries the lowest seal of the chapters it borrows from.

A NOTE OF CARE

This is an inventory, not a purge. Don't throw food away, don't label anything forbidden, and don't buy supplements because of a low number. If you have diagnosed irritable bowel syndrome, go slowly with new fiber and with support.

NOTES

BEYOND THE BOOK · SHEET

Pantry and Fridge Audit

Date _____ Different plants already in the house: _____

PANTRY

count ____

FRIDGE

count ____

FREEZER

count ____

SPICE RACK

count ____

SWAP, DON'T BAN

ULTRA-PROCESSED, REACHED FOR MOST		A SUBSTITUTE I'D ACTUALLY EAT
	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	

TWO NEW PLANTS FOR THE NEXT LIST

A FERMENTED FOOD ALREADY IN THE HOUSE?

Your Food-and-Signal Map

Chapter 14 asks you to follow one signal; Chapter 8 asks what you were doing around the meal that sat worst. This map puts the two side by side for seven days, without interpreting anything until the week closes.

WHAT YOU NEED

- [ ] Your one signal from Chapter 14
- [ ] The sheet, by the table
- [ ] Seven days, end date first

1 DAY 1



CHOOSE

Your signal

The one that most spoils your day: bloating after eating, midafternoon energy, sleep quality or mental clarity.

2 EACH MEAL



WRITE

Time and context

What time you ate and what you were doing right before: a meeting, the car, standing at the counter. Not calories.

3 EACH EVENING



SCORE

The signal, 0 to 10

One number for the day, at the same time each evening.

4 DAY 7



CLOSE

Then look

Only on day seven, look for overlaps between high scores and crowded meals. One week is a clue, not a proof.

The sheet for this week is on page 86.

WHY IT WORKS PRELIMINARY

Self-monitoring has support from a neighboring field (Chapter 3), and one signal instead of five is reasoning, not a tested result (Chapter 14). The combination finds clues; it isn't a test for food intolerance.

A NOTE OF CARE

Don't cut foods based on one week of this map: watching your body closely raises what you feel (Chapter 3). Never cut out gluten before celiac disease has been looked into. If an alarm sign from Chapter 13 shows up, the map closes and you make an appointment.

NOTES

BEYOND THE BOOK · SHEET

Food-and-Signal Map, Seven Days

My signal _____ Started _____ Closes on day seven _____

	BREAKFAST time · right before	LUNCH time · right before	DINNER time · right before	SNACKS time · where	SIGNAL 0–10, evening	ONE WORD the day
1 DAY						
2 DAY						
3 DAY						
4 DAY						
5 DAY						
6 DAY						
7 DAY						

DAY 7 · ONLY NOW: WHERE DO THE HIGH SCORES AND THE CROWDED MEALS OVERLAP?

BEYOND THE BOOK · CHAPTERS 2 AND 12

The Headline Card

Every week something new promises to fix your gut. Chapters 2 and 12 give you the questions to ask it. This card puts them on one page, so you can run a headline, a label or an ad through them in two minutes.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ One claim, copied word for word
- ☐ A pen
- ☐ Two minutes

1 ANY TIME



PICK

One claim

A headline, a supplement label, a post. Copy the promise in its own words.

2 QUESTION 1



ASK

Which inflammation?

Acute, chronic low-grade, or plain bloating? When something promises to fight your inflammation, ask which of the three (Chapter 2).

3 QUESTION 2



ASK

One, buyable, fast?

The five beliefs in Chapter 12 share a format: one thing, purchasable, fast-acting. The format is what fails.

4 QUESTION 3



ASK

Who checked it?

A supplement is not a drug: the FDA doesn't approve it for safety or effectiveness before it's sold. Is there a trial in humans?

The sheet for this week is on page 88.

WHY IT WORKS MODERATE

The questions come straight from Chapters 2 and 12, both marked Moderate in this workbook. The card doesn't rate products; it helps you see what kind of claim you're looking at.

A NOTE OF CARE

The card is for curiosity, not for stopping treatment. Anything a doctor prescribed stays until you talk with whoever prescribed it; the doubt goes to the appointment, not the kitchen (Chapter 13).

NOTES

BEYOND THE BOOK · SHEET

The Headline Card

Three cards, one claim each. Cut along the dashed lines if you want to keep one in your wallet.

CARD 1 · the claim, word for word

SOURCE _____

Which inflammation?	☐ Acute	☐ Chronic low-grade	☐ Bloating	☐ Doesn't say
The format	☐ One thing	☐ Purchasable	☐ Fast-acting	
Who checked it?	☐ Trial in humans	☐ Animals or lab	☐ Testimonials	☐ Nothing cited
Seal I'd give it	☐ Strong	☐ Moderate	☐ Preliminary	☐ Unsupported
What I'll do	☐ Nothing	☐ Ask at my appointment	☐ Read the source	

CARD 2 · the claim, word for word

SOURCE _____

Which inflammation?	☐ Acute	☐ Chronic low-grade	☐ Bloating	☐ Doesn't say
The format	☐ One thing	☐ Purchasable	☐ Fast-acting	
Who checked it?	☐ Trial in humans	☐ Animals or lab	☐ Testimonials	☐ Nothing cited
Seal I'd give it	☐ Strong	☐ Moderate	☐ Preliminary	☐ Unsupported
What I'll do	☐ Nothing	☐ Ask at my appointment	☐ Read the source	

CARD 3 · the claim, word for word

SOURCE _____

Which inflammation?	☐ Acute	☐ Chronic low-grade	☐ Bloating	☐ Doesn't say
The format	☐ One thing	☐ Purchasable	☐ Fast-acting	
Who checked it?	☐ Trial in humans	☐ Animals or lab	☐ Testimonials	☐ Nothing cited
Seal I'd give it	☐ Strong	☐ Moderate	☐ Preliminary	☐ Unsupported
What I'll do	☐ Nothing	☐ Ask at my appointment	☐ Read the source	

A Thirty-Day Plan

Chapters 14, 19 and 20 each ask for one piece of writing: a signal, a day one and a sentence for the day it breaks. This page puts the three on one sheet, with Where You Are Now at both ends.

WHAT YOU NEED

- [ ] Where You Are Now, filled today
- [ ] Your one signal
- [ ] Ten quiet minutes

1 TODAY



WRITE

Day 1 and day 30

Both dates, before anything else. A plan without a start date is an intention (Chapter 19).

2 TODAY



CHOOSE

Signal and level

Your one signal (Chapter 14), your first domain from Where You Are Now, and minimum, middle or ambitious.

3 TODAY



WRITE

The slip sentence

What you'll do the first time you miss two days in a row, while things are going well (Chapter 20).

4 DAY 30



COMPARE

Fill it in again

Where You Are Now again, before you look at day one's numbers.

The sheet for this week is on page 90.

WHY IT WORKS PRELIMINARY

Staggered change hasn't been shown to beat simultaneous change; the book chooses it for capacity (Chapter 19). Writing the slip plan in advance borrows implementation intentions, the best-backed tool in Chapter 18.

A NOTE OF CARE

Nothing gets resolved in thirty days, and results don't arrive in a straight line. If a week collapses, repeat it. If your total on Where You Are Now is 46 or more, add a doctor's visit to the plan.

NOTES

BEYOND THE BOOK · SHEET

A Thirty-Day Plan

Day 1 _____ Day 30 _____ One page, kept where you'll see it.

WHERE YOU ARE NOW

	DAY 1	DAY 30
Sleep		
Digestion		
Energy		
Mood		
Movement		
Total		

MY FIRST DOMAIN

MY ONE SIGNAL

MY LEVEL

☐ Minimum ☐ Middle ☐ Ambitious

SIGNAL SCORE, DAY 1 → DAY 30

THE FOUR WEEKS · ONE NEW ENTRY EACH, THE FOURTH ADDS NOTHING

Week 1 ..... kept ☐

Week 2 ..... kept ☐

Week 3 ..... kept ☐

Week 4 ..... kept ☐

THREE IF-THEN PLANS

If ..... **then** .....

If ..... **then** .....

If ..... **then** .....

THE FIRST TIME I MISS TWO DAYS IN A ROW, I WILL

AT THE END

Sources, Chapter by Chapter

The same list as the book, with each article's DOI where PubMed confirms it. Books, web pages and a few psychology papers PubMed doesn't index are listed without one.

CHAPTER 1 · YOU'RE NOT IMAGINING IT

Doles, N., Mon, M. Y., Shaikh, A., et al. (2025). Interpretating normal values and reference ranges for laboratory tests. *The Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*, 38(1), 174-179. doi.org/10.3122/jabfm.2024.240224R1

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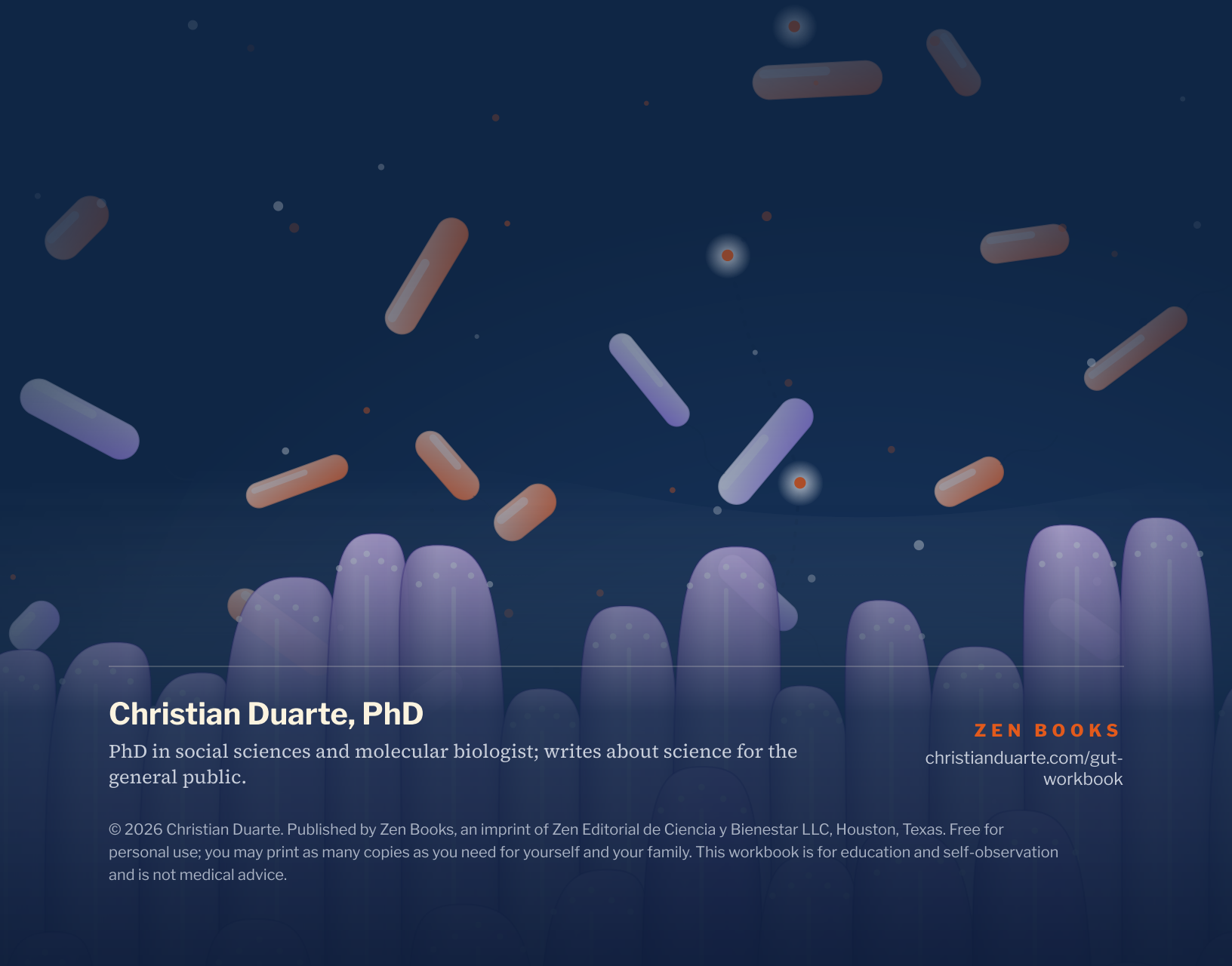
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