



10 Essential Healing Foundations

20 By
26 Documenting Hope
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While there are many pathways to healing, Documenting Hope believes that there are certain foundational pieces that must be in place in order to facilitate the healing process. In this booklet we have included 10 essential healing foundations and ways to access them that are free or low cost as well as ways to access them through products, services or other 'hacks.'

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10 Essential Healing Foundations

A Special Guide for Hope and Healing Expo Attendees



Healing is possible. Here's where to begin

The Foundations of Real Healing

We asked the Documenting Hope Staff and Medical and Scientific Advisory Board for their favorite healing hacks as well as favorite products and services from companies that provide healing solutions. These are our "staff picks." Enjoy!

While this list was curated by Documenting Hope, we asked each company listed as a "staff pick" to make a donation to Documenting Hope to help us underwrite the cost of

the conference. There is no requirement for a company to donate to be listed in our guide, but companies that support Documenting Hope are indicated with an asterisk. Some of these companies have provided discounts for you to enjoy!

1. Spend Time Outside in Nature

Why It Matters

Human biology evolved outdoors. Exposure to natural sunlight regulates circadian rhythm/ biology and supports mitochondrial function. Grounding (direct skin contact with the earth) has been shown to reduce inflammation and improve autonomic regulation. Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) research demonstrates measurable reductions in cortisol and improved immune function through phytoncide (natural compounds released by trees) exposure. Natural light exposure supports vitamin D production, nitric oxide release, and nervous system balance among other important physiological effects. Modern indoor living disrupts these essential biological rhythms. Reconnecting with nature restores them.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Walk barefoot on grass, sand, or soil
- Morning sunlight exposure within 30 minutes of waking
- Forest walks or beach visits
- Picnic in a local park
- Garden or tend to plants outdoors

Healing Hacks



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2. Detoxify Environmental Toxins

Why It Matters

Children today face an unprecedented toxic load: heavy metals, endocrine disruptors, pesticides, and synthetic chemicals. Detoxification occurs primarily through the liver, kidneys, gut, skin, and lungs. Sweating, mineral repletion, fiber intake, and mitochondrial support are key to optimizing detox pathways. Reducing incoming exposure is just as important as enhancing elimination.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Use Epsom salt baths (magnesium sulfate)
- Filter drinking water
- Increase fiber intake
- Sweat through movement
- Reduce synthetics in your life, including: fragrance, plastics, paints, polishes, food and personal care products with chemicals and additives



3. Mitochondrial & Cellular Support

Why It Matters

Mitochondria are the energy engines of the cell. Environmental stress, inflammation, and toxins impair mitochondrial function, leading to fatigue, neurodevelopmental challenges, and immune dysregulation among other symptoms. Sunlight, red light therapy, cold exposure, and nutrient-dense diets all stimulate mitochondrial biogenesis and ATP production.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Daily sunlight exposure
- Cold showers or cold plunges
- Regular movement/exercise
- Prioritize sleep
- Clean, nutrient dense whole-food diet
- Nontoxic living (as many chemicals damage mitochondria)



4. Microbiome Support

Why It Matters

The gut microbiome regulates immunity, inflammation, detoxification, neurotransmitter production, and metabolic signaling. Dysbiosis, or an imbalance in the gut bacteria, is linked to autism, autoimmune disease, eczema, and ADHD. Fiber diversity, fermented foods, sunlight, and toxin reduction help restore microbial diversity.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Eat 20+ different types of plant foods weekly
- Fermented foods (sauerkraut, kefir, kimchi)
- Reduce sugar and refined carbohydrates
- Outdoor play and exposure to natural environments
- Avoid unnecessary antibiotics or pharmaceuticals (such as steroid or hormone medications) that damage the microbiome
- Avoid synthetic chemicals, especially pesticides and herbicides sprayed on food



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5. Immune & Nervous System Regulation

Why It Matters

Chronic inflammation and nervous system dysregulation drive many childhood conditions. Vagus nerve tone influences the communication between the brain and the gut and other vital organs and is involved in immune regulation, emotional regulation, behavior and much more. Breathwork, co-regulation, safe attachment, and gentle immune support are foundational.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Box breathing or other structured breathing techniques
- Humming or singing
- Gentle yoga
- Parent-child co-regulation through play and calming activities
- Time in nature



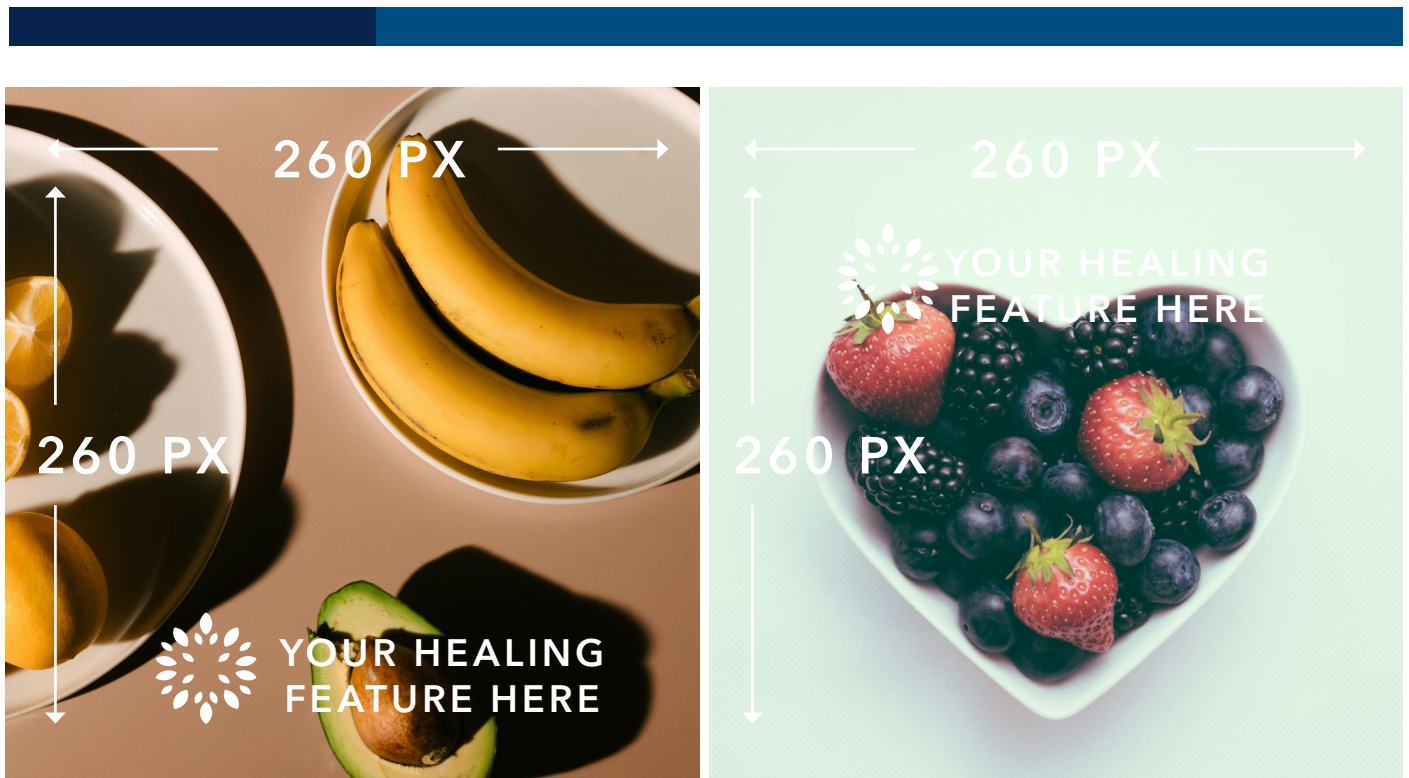
6. Deep Nutrition

Why It Matters

Food is biological information. Micronutrient deficiencies impair detoxification, methylation, mitochondrial energy, and immune regulation. Stable blood sugar and nutrient dense diets are critical for neurological regulation, immune function, proper growth and development and overall wellness.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Prioritize organic whole foods
- Balance protein, fats, carbs
- Reduce ultra-processed foods
- Cook at home
- Stay hydrated with clean, filtered water



7. Move! Support the Physical Body

Why It Matters

Movement improves lymphatic flow, detoxification, fascia health, blood sugar regulation, boosts endorphins, supports neurotransmitter balance and reduces oxidative stress. Sedentary living contributes to inflammation and mitochondrial dysfunction, not to mention stagnant or clogged lymphatics and detoxification pathways.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Walking, jogging or running outdoors
- Dancing
- Playing sports or engaging in activities like martial arts, yoga, tai chi.
- Play-based movement like playing jump rope or playing on playgrounds
- Bodyweight exercises or "heavy work"

Healing Hacks



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8. Optimize Genomics

Why It Matters

Genetic polymorphisms influence detox capacity, inflammation, neurotransmitter metabolism, nutrient needs and much more. Understanding your own genomic vulnerabilities (and unique differences) allows personalized and targeted therapeutic interventions.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Read *Dirty Genes* by Dr. Ben Lynch to understand the importance of improving diet and lifestyle to optimize your genes
- Focus on universally helpful epigenetic inputs such as a clean diet, regular sleep, regular movement and stress reduction. All genes in all people benefit from these foundations
- Avoid toxins that might cause unwanted genetic expression
- Support methylation with whole foods



9. Plants as Healing Tools

Why It Matters

Besides the invaluable daily nutrition plant foods provide for our bodies, they can also be powerful medicine. Plants provide polyphenols, flavonoids, terpenes, and alkaloids that regulate inflammation, mitochondrial function, detoxification, and immune balance. Whether used in herbalism, homeopathy, gemmotherapy or essential oils, plants are powerful medicine!

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Grow herbs at home
- Use readily accessible medicinal plants in your cooking such as turmeric, ginger, garlic
- Drink herbal teas like lemon balm, peppermint, dandelion or chamomile
- Forage for safe plants
- Use culinary spices like oregano, thyme, and rosemary therapeutically

Healing Hacks



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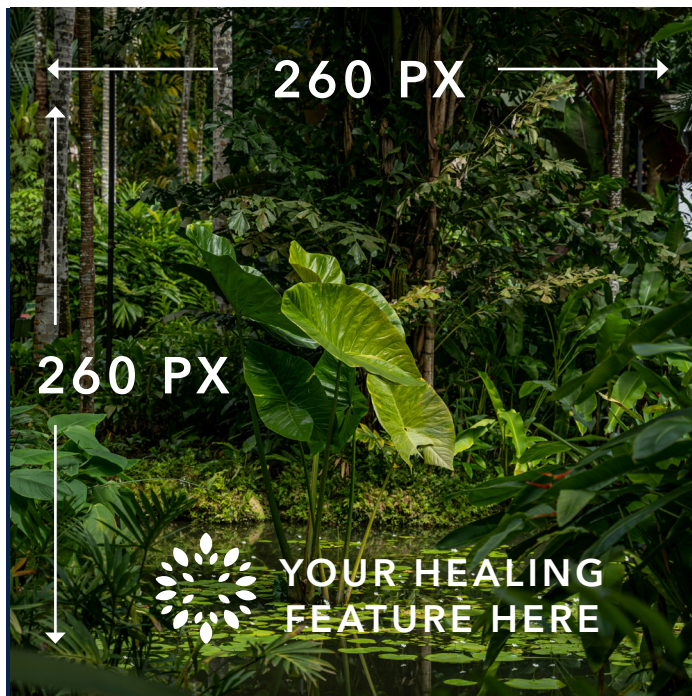
10. The Power of Light

Why It Matters

Light is a primary regulator of circadian rhythm, mitochondrial ATP production, hormone balance, and immune function. Blue light at night disrupts melatonin; red and near-infrared light stimulate cellular repair. Children today are light-deficient and overexposed to artificial frequencies.

Free / Low-Cost Options

- Daily morning and evening sunlight exposure as well as dose of daytime sunlight exposure
- Reduce screens at night, block blue light in evening
- Use candles or candle simulating lighting in evening
- Sleep in total darkness
- Eat dinner before sunset
- Remove your LED and halogen bulbs and use incandescent or LEDs with full spectrum light



Healing is not about a single intervention.

It is about restoring foundational biological inputs.

Nature. Light. Food. Movement. Community. Regulation.

When these foundations are in place, the body remembers how to heal.



Bonus Healing Foundation: Community

Humans are biologically wired for connection. Research consistently shows that strong social bonds improve immune resilience, regulate the nervous system, reduce inflammation, and even increase longevity. Co-regulation – the calming effect of safe, supportive relationships – directly impacts vagus nerve tone, stress hormones, and

emotional stability. Healing does not happen in isolation. By participating in Documenting Hope’s in-person gatherings and online community, you are surrounding yourself with shared purpose, encouragement, and collective wisdom. That sense of belonging is not just comforting – it is physiologically therapeutic.

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