On feeling healthy

Approaches to balancing health and productivity from Mitski, Dorothea Lasky, and Somi; Esmé Weijun Wang on working with limitations; Joshua Sanchez’s tips for staying sane and healthy while making a film; Juan Mendez on choosing a healthy path; Laleh Khorramian on knowing when to take a break; plus working artists’ insights on the connection between creativity and wellbeing, working through illness, freeing yourself from ego and expectations, the value of self acceptance, and taking care of yourself.
On feeling healthy
What does it take to feel healthy?

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The Creative Independent is a resource.

Our goal is to feed and grow the community of people who create. We publish interviews, wisdom, and guides that illuminate the trials and tribulations of living a creative life, as told by working artists— including writers, musicians, designers, visual artists, and others.

The Creative Independent’s logo is a spiral. We like spirals because they’re about circling back to a core idea over time, something all creative people must do. As Julia Cameron puts it in *The Artist's Way*, “You will circle through some of the issues over and over, each time at a different level. There is no such thing as being done with an artistic life. Frustrations and rewards exist at all levels on the path. Our aim here is to find the trail, establish our footing, and begin the climb.”

While our logo is a spiral, our mascot is a snail. We like snails because of their spiral-shaped shells, and because they excrete slime. The slime helps a snail glide over abrasive terrain, and also creates a map of the snail’s path through time. Tracing a snail’s trail makes us wonder, Where is the snail now? And where was it going in the first place?
What you hold in your hands now is a publication focused on feeling healthy, compiled from The Creative Independent’s growing archive.

Most of the included quotes, essays, and guides have been excerpted from longer articles, all of which can be found at www.thecreativeindependent.com/search. We hope this collected wisdom helps you glide a bit more smoothly as you forge your own creative path.
How do you balance health and productivity?

A large part of being able to create is feeling healthy, which can be hard given stress and anxiety, a lack of healthcare options, and any other number of things that can make it hard to focus and keep going. How do you balance being creatively productive with maintaining a healthy mind/body?

— Question submitted to TCI by Anonymous
I haven’t found a real balance yet. I’ve just figured out how to keep my body and mind from fully breaking down, and the creative productivity can come or not come—but I don’t have the capacity to worry about that.

A lot of trying to stay healthy is learning to say no. I schedule regular short breaks between tours or between shows so I can go to the doctor, pick up my prescriptions, or just eat a real meal and get a full night’s sleep. I keep these short maintenance breaks no matter what, and I turn down a lot of gigs for them. I don’t drink alcohol on tour, and I go straight to sleep as soon as I can after shows. I also have a workout regimen that can be done without equipment in a small space in about 20-30 minutes. I used to get very ill or just collapse on tour, and realized I wouldn’t be able to keep doing this if I wasn’t physically strong.

As an artist, you’re given the impression that every opportunity is the last and only and best opportunity you’ll ever get, and there’s a lot of pressure to say yes to whatever opportunities or working conditions are thrust upon you. You have to keep reminding yourself that there will be other opportunities, and that no matter how shiny or fleeting the chance in front of you looks, if you’re sick or burned out then you won’t be able to follow through on new opportunities anyway.

—Multi-instrumentalist & songwriter Mitski
In short, I haven't been doing a good job of maintaining anything like health for a very long while. I agree that a large part of feeling creative is feeling healthy, and feeling like I am one with my body processes. I haven't felt like that very often over the past few years, partially because my day-to-day life has involved a lot of care-taking. Another reason that I haven't felt healthy is that I've faced some health stuff that has made me pretty sedentary. Ideally, I am most creative when I am running nearly every day and eating lots of vegetables and drinking lots of water. It's crazy how simple it is and yet how hard it is to make that happen.

The other thing is that, in order to be creative, people need to be in control of their time. Maybe this is why a residency can be so helpful for some artists. Again, creating a balance is so key, but I haven't figured out yet how to do it. I am best when I am blissed out by passion or have a plate of endless fruit in front of me. Right now I feel like a stale, slowly vibrating cracker. I am not sure what this means for the poems I have been writing.

— Poet and author Dorothea Lasky
How do I balance health and productivity? _Somi

I try not to reach for my phone and look at email or social media or whatever in the morning. Instead, I try to just be quiet and spend time writing in my journal. When I don’t find time to do that is when I feel less centered. This actually comes from the book _The Artist's Way_, but I really believe in it. The morning pages idea was really a revolutionary thing for me, and is so helpful. I think that’s one thing that keeps me sane. It’s so important to find quiet time for reflection, so we can explore our hearts and say whatever it is we need to say.

In terms of staying physically healthy, for me, it’s all about drinking water. It sounds simple, but if I’m on top of my water game, I feel better. Vocally, physically, all of it. Overall, I have my good and bad moments. Like right now I can sit here and tell you, "Oh, I go to the gym anywhere from three to five times a week, and I have a trainer." But that’s not always my answer. It’s tricky, you know? This is sort of a side note, but what I am trying to do now is be less obsessive about my exercise routine. I’m trying to be gentle with myself, while still challenging my body physically. It’s a balance of self care, of being aware of what we put into our bodies, and how we use our bodies. It’s about finding that middle ground, and it’s always a work in progress.

— Musician and vocalist Somi
“Most people struggle with a lot of stuff and often we need help figuring out how to deal with our feelings. When it comes to sadness, particularly people who struggle with depression, there is usually this feeling that you’re gonna feel this way forever. People need to have hope that there’s the possibility they can get out of it, that these feelings will eventually go away. I often think the best way to feel that is to hear the words of somebody who knows exactly what that feels like. That’s the value of art or literature, hearing one person saying, ‘This is what I’ve been through.’”

Musician Aimee Mann on writing sad songs
“Art has saved my life so many times. For every weirdo freak artist I’m friends with, which is everybody in my life, the existence of art has kept them around and sane. This is the theoretical underpinning of my consulting practice—that artists are people who need to be in a creative practice in order to be well. That makes them different from people who don’t need that. Bodies are different. Humans need different things to have a connection to themselves and something beyond themselves, to have their spiritual interior feel well. When artists stop making their work or they get distanced from it or they feel disconnected from it, their quality of life goes down.”

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Writer and consultant Beth Pickens on why money won’t save you
“A big thing that people don’t talk about enough is mental health. For a lot of writers, you [start writing] because it’s a type of therapy. It’s a space that you can go in and breathe. As you get older, you have to make sure to find a community that supports you, find the voices that hear you, and identify the reasons for why you’re doing what you’re doing. You’ve also got to be very careful, because in the arts it’s always about what’s next. There’s a competitive edge and there’s the critical edge, which is very difficult to process sometimes. You really need to find a healthy way to survive, because it’s a challenging and vulnerable mental landscape.”

Composer Paola Prestini on creating your own space and setting your own metrics for success
“I’ve been exploring the stigmatization around mental health and being open and honest about feelings, because that’s basically been my job. Everybody in this music scene is a little bit—I don’t want to say ‘messed up’ because that implies there’s something wrong with you—but we all feel a little messed up and maybe that’s why we do art. I recently read this Alain de Botton book and it changed my life. He said, ‘Art is there for you when love stops being there for you.’ I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, true.’ So being honest about those really dark things, like saying, ‘I feel disappointing, I feel like I’m nothing,’ is important.”

Musician Julien Baker on learning to articulate joy
"I feel like I’m very much unable to reach that kind of creative place without some beautiful mistake happening in my studio. Like, ‘Oh, I fucked this up,’ whatever, and then the accidental sound ends up pairing with an old sound that I did five days ago that I didn’t touch, and this new thing surprises me. Really, I think about that and I get so happy. Those are the moments I feel very connected to something and extremely happy and lucky to be alive... There’s something really healthy about the openness that you can have when you’re allowed to be creative all day, every day, for a while. You just feel healthier."

Musician and producer Nicolas Jaar on chasing a creative high
“I do feel like a sick person, in that I require a lot more upkeep than the average person. It’s frustrating because you don’t feel like you can always say that. Like, I would be uncomfortable telling my department chair, ’Hey, I can’t teach any more than five classes because I can’t handle that level of stress because I’m bipolar.’ That would make me feel really uncomfortable, which sort of makes me feel like a hypocrite because I want to remove the stigma of mental illness, but I don’t feel like we’re there in society yet where you can tell your boss about that. But constant maintenance is required, which is frustrating. And I learned it the hard way.”

*On Working Through Illness*

*Writer Juliet Escoria on writing as a way to break up routine*
“My views on life have changed due to the extremes [of living through illness], and one of the things that I’ve eliminated for the most part at this point are toxic people. And some of them are family members. I’ve disconnected for my own health. Because I do believe that it’s not just like, ‘Let’s go to the gym and stay healthy,’ it’s also eating well and, you know, taking walks, biking, and just being out and about. It’s also having your heart and mind in the right place, which is what I’m pursuing these days—having that semblance of serenity.”

Musician Draco Rosa on creativity as a path to resurrection
“My grandma died of colon cancer and I have GI issues. I have to get a colonoscopy every five years. I just had one. There was a moment where I stopped myself from taking the hospital bed selfie. I was like, ‘No, keep this off [line].’ It’s therapeutic for me to write about these things, but while it seems like I share everything, there are a lot of things people don’t know about me… It’s hard. This summer I thought, ‘I look so fucking depressing on Twitter and on my podcast.’ I used to wake up and look at my phone, and then look at my phone before I went to bed. Now I have a meditation routine. I meditate in the morning and before I go to bed, and keep my phone off. I have noticed that the older I get, I do hold back on some things. Also, I truly stopped reading the comments several years ago and I feel like that is a monumental moment for all writers. Not reading the comments, whether it’s on Facebook or underneath an article, was a big step.”

Writer Sophie Saint Thomas on putting in the work
"It’s hard to know if we as a species are more or less mentally ill than we were in the past. Overall, anxiety does seem to be up. Diet and exercise have profound effects on our mental health, but sometimes our brains need additional assistance. I hang out with a lot of creative people, and many of them use psychotropic meds and/or talk therapy... We all have to figure out what works for us. I have many friends who are on SSRIs. Others microdose with everything from LSD, to ketamine, to mushrooms, to lithium, to marijuana. As the natural world disappears, anxiety could be a way sensitive brains respond. Who the hell knows? But if your brain chemistry betrays you, treat yourself the way you would treat a friend in a similar situation: with gentle care. Get help. It is harder for many of us to accept help than to give it."

Musician, painter, writer, plumber, and carpenter Thor Harris on how to stay healthy
Something that you speak a lot about is being an ambitious person living with limitations. What kind of practices do you use to balance the many things you want to get done, while making sure you’re still taking care of yourself?

So today is an unusual day in that I met with a friend this morning, and we’re coworking at The Wing San Francisco. It is unusual that I’m here, because I normally work at home in bed because that’s easiest for me as someone with a lot of physical limitations. [Wang lives with late-stage Lyme disease.] The person I’m working with today is a friend named Laura, who is also a writer and a journalist.

Excerpted from a longer conversation with Kristen Felicetti, read the full article on www.thecreativeindependent.com
On your website, you mention creativity, resilience, and legacy as three of your main focuses. How do you approach the idea of leaving a creative legacy?

I’ve been thinking a lot about legacy in the last two years, particularly because of illness and illness leading to musing about mortality. I started to think about legacy as something not only related to having a statue made of you, but also just related to the idea of having an impact. If one can think of legacy as having an impact, one can have an impact at almost any time, including with other people. Interactions are great opportunities to leave a small legacy, to have a small impact.

Actually—to say that everyday interactions are opportunities for small impacts might do a great disservice to everyday interactions, because everyday interactions can actually leave huge impacts. I’m thinking about this story that I shared on Twitter semi-recently that has to do with The Collected Schizophrenias [Wang’s book]. I had gone to my psychiatrist’s office and she had just told me that she believed my schizoaffective disorder was medication resistant and treatment resistant, and
that I was probably going to live with it for the rest of my life and that there was basically no hope for me in terms of living at a higher level than I was at that point, which was incredibly hard to hear.

I left her office, and I was crying. As I was heading to the elevators, the security guard stopped me and asked me if I was okay. I was just kind of standing there and crying and he said, "What happened?" I told him a very abbreviated version, and he said, "Are you a writer?" There was no reason for him to think that I might be a writer, and of course he didn’t know who I was. I just nodded and he said, "Go home and write about it. You’re going to be okay." That had such an impact on me. In fact, even thinking about it now, I can’t help but think that he was probably an angel of some kind. I did find him later and I gave him a thank-you note that I had written, but then I never saw him again after that. That was an example of something someone did that had an enormous impact on me.

Is there anything else you wanted to mention that’s been helpful for your health and creativity?

I’ve been rediscovering movement. For years, I was very sick and I felt that I didn’t have access to movement anymore. But recently, I’ve been experimenting with a little bit of dancing, which I feel has really helped. So in the morning, I’ll put on my wireless headphones and dance to one or two songs. I feel that moving my body, and feeling the joy of the music, and the joy of moving my body to the beat kind of gets my juices going and helps me feel ready to get the words down on the page.
“There are a lot of artists who get wrapped up in the constant seeking of attention, and for the sake of our own mental health and the sake of our work, it’s essential to step outside of ourselves. [When you’re a parent], you have to, and you have to be organized, you have to make decisions faster, and you prioritize in terms of what you decide to do. You spend less time wallowing in self doubt, and more time just being productive.”

Filmmaker Laura Parnes on improvisation and deep collaboration
"I’m not a tough guy. I’m not brave. I’m just curious. I’m very well aware of how quickly life goes. You know, Ian [MacKaye] and I both have a lot of dead friends. Everything from suicide to overdose to wrong place, wrong time. There’s a lot to get done. Whether you want to deal with that or not is up to the individual. You just make up your mind, like, ‘I’m gonna write this book.’ How many people are gonna read it? I don’t care. How can I control that? I just want to do the damn thing. That allows me to go unrestrained."

Jack-of-all-trades Henry Rollins on defining success
“Considering my own insignificance always makes me laugh and helps me relax. Everyone’s like, ‘Am I doing enough? Can I do more? Does my life matter? Do people like me?’... I think I do my best work when I’m not concerned about how it’s going to be received, and when I’m really in touch with what I feel is the most true part of myself.”

Writer, thinker, and activist adrienne maree brown on vulnerability, playfulness, and keeping yourself honest
"I instill authentic creativity in myself [through spirituality] by being really honed in on myself. Centering back to, ‘Okay, this is what I like. This is not affected by anyone else. How can I express that?’ Meditation, stretching; [these practices] give me space mentally, and in my body, to create more, because I’m letting go of things that I don’t need. Even small things like, ‘Okay, this project turned out differently. Okay, I’m letting go of that.’ When I am able to let go of things that bother me, that helps me create space to have the mindset to make more."

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YouTube creator and consultant Rachel Nguyen on feeding and releasing the ego
Tips for staying sane and healthy while making a film*

Excerpted from a longer guide written by Joshua Sanchez, with illustrations by Molly Fairhurst. *Note that while this guide was written from the perspective of making a film, it can be applied to any type of creative project.

Tip 1: You are not your success or your failure.

Pinning your emotional wellbeing on whether your film gets made, gets into a good film festival, gets distributed, makes money, etc, is a surefire way to fall into the traps of depression and anxiety. Even if your film is successful, there are additional stressors that come with that, so it’s important to keep in mind that through everything, you and your wellbeing are more important than what you’re making, always.

Making a film will never solve your life’s problems. It will never make what is broken fixed. It will never
Tip 2: When you need to stop, stop.

“Never quit.” This is a cardinal rule in filmmaking, like sports. But it’s not always true—at least in the short term.

It’s important to be able to step out of the bubble of your film whenever you need to, and take stock of what you’re trying to accomplish, how far you’ve come, and what is truly important to you in life. This goes for the development, production, post-production, and release of your film.

If you’re directing a film, you’ll often find yourself at the helm of a circus of people all vying for your attention. In this type of situation, it’s important to realize that you have the power to say stop and walk away when you need to. Despite whatever sense of urgency is being pushed onto you, know that the film might be better off if you’re able to clear your head for a moment and think about the best solution instead of just reacting to the chaos.

Tip 3: Always pay yourself.

One big regret I have about Four, [the first feature film I directed,] is that I didn’t insist on getting paid. Instead, I agreed to have my fee for directing the film deferred so that the money could be put into other parts of the production.
There are different schools of thought on this. Some producers say it’s a good idea to use every resource you have to get the movie made. [However,] in a regular job, you expect to get paid for the skilled work you provide. Directing a film is hard work—perhaps some of the hardest work you’ll ever experience. On a basic level, not paying yourself is setting yourself up within the business structure of your film as a person who is not worth paying.

Unless you’re rich, deferring your salary is deferring money that you may need to use to stay grounded and financially stable in this world. Having the resources to support your life is not only good for you as an individual, but it’s also good for the film.

**Tip 4: Breathe. Repeat.**

One of the most valuable things I’ve learned in life is how to meditate. I only wish I’d learned it sooner.

Science has proven the immense benefits of mindfulness meditation time and time again. In filmmaking, especially on a set, concentration training will help you keep a laser-like focus on the film you’re trying to make. Meditation makes it so much easier to get into the artistic zone and stay there for as long as you need to.

The practice also illuminates how temporary everything in life is. On a film set, every decision or crisis can seem like the end of the world. But the time you spend in production is only a fleeting moment. Remembering this can calm you down and will likely improve the quality of work you’re doing on set.
Tip 5: Remember why you got into it.

This was my idea of success when I was first starting out: To tell a story that emotionally connected with an audience and made them re-evaluate their own place in the world.

When I’m feeling lost in the fray of swirling influences and power plays that it takes to make a movie, I find it helpful to go back and remember the good old days. Ask yourself, what made you fall in love with movies in the first place?

Tip 6: Watch the drink.

The film industry is filled to the brim with alcohol. Alcohol can exacerbate depression and vice versa. I myself drink, albeit moderately and usually socially, so I especially have to watch out for how alcohol can creep into my life because of my job. At festivals, if I have a film that I’m promoting, I opt out of alcohol most of the time. This was a hard-learned lesson.

Remember, it’s okay to not drink at industry gatherings. In fact, being clear and sober may help you foster more fruitful relationships with your colleagues and give you a better sense of how to network in a smarter way.

Tip 7: It’s okay to not read your press.

Never feel obligated to read your press if you think it could damage your own self-worth. It’s more than okay to stay away from the internet or from social media to keep your own mental health intact. I’ve found that if a review is good, or if someone of significance
says something positive about me or my work, I’ll hear about it via friends and family. Constantly needing the validation of your worth or your film’s worth can be emotionally taxing and contribute to the already volatile emotional roller coaster of making a film.

**Tip 8: Keep your day job.**

“Don’t quit your day job” is classic, sage advice in show business and there is no shame in abiding by it. I myself have maintained a day job for the last 10 years. This job has kept me afloat during my ongoing film pursuits, and during my entire experience of making a feature film.

Thankfully, I’ve had a job that stuck by me and allowed me to take extended time off to pursue my artistic goals. Not every job will be this accommodating, but it never hurts to ask. If you’re a loyal employee to a company or organization, check what their policy is for an unpaid leave of absence. Remember, people take time off for weddings, vacations, funerals, and births. It’s okay to ask for time off to make a project you feel passionately about.

**Tip 9: Make a plan to avoid burnout**

A big downside of maintaining a full-time job while making a feature film is burnout. You’ll likely be pushing yourself to exhaustion, which does not bode well for your stress levels in general. Make sure to have a plan in place to maintain a healthy lifestyle if you find yourself working two demanding jobs.

With a little planning and hard work, you can make a successful film without sacrificing your mental health. Take the initiative
to prepare yourself for any mental, emotional, or financial challenges that may come your way. Make sure you give yourself room to slow down and reflect on the choices that you’re making.

If you suffer from mental illness, but have a great idea for a film, don’t give up. It’s important for the world to have a diverse representation of stories, by diverse voices. It may be more difficult for you to get a film made, but I’m proof that you can tell a compelling story with incredible actors that has an audience—and survive to tell the tale.
“So many actors and performers think to themselves, ‘If I could just get to that level then I would be okay. I would feel confident and comfortable and grounded and good about myself.’ But even really successful actors I know still exist in that same frame of mind. They feel the rejections that they receive just as hard. They never see themselves as having finally arrived. Even for people who work all the time, there’s always that feeling that you’re one job away from obscurity, or that you’re about to get untethered from the Earth. Your sense of self can be so deeply affected by that. And I see it really fuck up some people who deserve better.”

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*Writer and performer Amanda Duarte on creating your own best role*
"At first I really didn’t incorporate myself into the work. I eventually started to realize that a lot of the issues around not photographing myself were directly related to issues I had with myself, which isn’t surprising, I guess. I didn’t find myself to be attractive in this way that other people did. Part of accepting myself and loving myself involved doing self-portraits. I was able to let go of all the issues and accept myself, which had been a big problem connected to the way I grew up—being a minority, being queer, being brown. It took me a little longer to feel comfortable with the idea that I could also be my own subject."

Photographer Anthony Urrea on finding your subject
“I keep thinking about the word ‘process.’ It’s interesting to me because I’ve dealt with a lot of mental health and emotional issues throughout my life, and the word ‘process,’ in this context, is used to mean processing your feelings, accepting your emotions, accepting what’s happened to you, guiding yourself away from being trapped in this uncomfortable, dissociative state. I think that’s totally linked to ‘process’ in the artistic sense, the way artists guide themselves to create. So probably the most important part of my process is literally processing my emotions and my feelings.”

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J Jennifer Espinoza on the shared experience of poetry
"What I finally realized is that nobody gets it. There is no answer. It’s not like somebody has [all of life’s answers] in their pocket and is just not sharing with me. There’s something wonderful about that. Once I found out that there wasn’t a right answer, it’s like, 'Cool, we’re good.' I’m just gonna make whatever I want and I’m fine with that. That’s what’s kept me happy and sober and sane all these years. I guess that’s the lesson—if you feel like doing something, saying something, making something, just do it in whatever way feels right for you."

Kelley Deal on having multiple creative outlets

“I try to be very honest and straightforward about everything. Because if you don’t, that’s when problems emerge. Sometimes when you say no to something or you cannot commit to something, you feel like you’re failing. But that is not the case. You have to realize what your capabilities are, or what you’re willing to do. It’s just accepting the fact that that is your reality, that’s what you can do, and just doing that has value."

Festival director Moni Saldaña on letting your work speak for itself
Why did you decide to leave New York City and move upstate?

It was a long time coming. [But] I had a career, and things were rolling along, so there wasn’t a reason to get up and move. There wasn’t an invitation to leave.

The recession had happened while I was abroad, and so I came back to things being very different economically. I was finding myself unable to afford living there. I had a relationship end, I had been in Europe for two years... and I just didn’t want to be back in New York by any means. Everything pointed to, “Time to go. This is not the place I want to be, nor can I afford to be here anymore.”
I remember I had a solo booth at Statements in Switzerland, and for a year I worked on that work. But somehow things felt off. I wasn’t connected to what I was doing. It was after that show that I said, “If this show doesn’t go in a certain way, I’m going to stop for a while.” That’s what happened. It just felt like there was something I needed to recover somehow in order to move forward.

I ended up going to a place that was a friend’s farm. They said, “Come here. Just heal. Get out of the city.” I honestly never saw myself going back. For me, it was a permanent move to begin with. I wasn’t thinking, “Oh, am I going to be able to live out of the city?” I was pretty dead set on never going back. At that time, I’d opted out of making “art” for a bit. I made a complete change. I said, “I don’t want to make art for a while. I want to de-complicate my life of needing a studio. I want to simplify.”

I’d always sewn since I was a kid, and it was something that was a peaceful activity for me. I needed something peaceful, something therapeutic, and something where I could regroup and not have the emotional demands that making art did—which I usually very much enjoyed, but I wasn’t enjoying at that time. I was going through a difficult time of transition, and I felt like the easier way to find peace was going to be through making an edit down of my practice and the demands of my life.

As far as survival goes, I’ve been through cancer and the treatments two times in my life. The demands that I had to go through with that were devastating and formative. It doesn’t matter who’s around you, or how much support you have—it’s a very solitary process. I think that going through that, contributed to this feeling of, “I don’t give a fuck. I don’t need to prove myself to anyone.”

The things I felt like I had to prove before, I don’t feel the same way about. Not that I want to subject anyone to art that’s shitty or not thought-out or meaningful or something. I just don’t feel like I have to prove the same things. Life is hard enough. That’s why I was also mad at art for a while. It was just too emotionally demanding, and I needed to step away and do something that wasn’t as emotionally consuming, and that’s why I was sewing. Sewing was a reprieve. And I am in love with sewing. It’s steady, it’s graceful, and it can be full of invention.

I learned so much about myself and about creativity and about being an artist and
being involved with that thing that you care for and you want. It had a huge impact on me, in a good way, to step back. What I discovered coming back was a lightness and shift in perspective in how I approach working in certain ways. Did I compromise? I don’t know. I still have the same standards of what I expect from my work, but I think that I look at things a little differently. I don’t know if I’m making more interesting work or less interesting work. I’m just doing it for now.

When you thought, “I’m going to take some time off,” did you feel right away that it would be a positive experience? Or were there moments where you thought, “Maybe I will never make work again?”

It didn’t feel positive at first. But... I quickly shifted my thinking about it. I’ve had basically three different stops in my life, whether it was from illness or whatever, where everything stopped for a good year or two. That was a very weird, not-weird thing—not being able to make anything. For sure, I thought, “It’s over, now maybe I won’t work with anyone. I’m written off.” It can always be bittersweet to leave something half done or have to change course. But in creativity it’s also par for the course. There are so many dimensions to life that now I don’t give this career some kind of overarching importance. It’s clear that I’m supposed to [make art] and it’s always been church for me. I’m making it and I’m doing it, and that’s a good thing. That’s the important thing. Whether the work gets seen is another thing that maybe I do or don’t have control over, but I don’t feel that that needs to happen in order for me to feel the legitimacy of being an artist or doing something important.

I never had any bad feelings towards the art world. I love to be involved. To be completely honest, I want to be recognized, and I want to have my work out there. I still desire those things... But I definitely have a different attitude. The art world is the art world. It is what it is. In my mind, I’m serving the work that I’m doing. I’m not blowing off the art world or saying fuck that, or that I don’t care, but I do have a different proximity to it, because I’m not in the city, and so I’m not as exposed. But this life works for me, because it’s here where I do what I do, and that makes me much more happy than being somewhere else. I like where I am.
When you’re sick, you gain perspective, and a new way of viewing the world. You still want people to recognize and see your work, but you realize if you’re happy outside of that, that’s ultimately the most important thing.

For sure. It’s like becoming an insect. That’s actually a metaphor I used a lot during my first illness. I felt like an insect, and it was really interesting feeling that way, and literally living like this insect that I was. I felt like I was made of metal and iridescence and was tiny tiny with enormous eyes. Whether that was going to come through in my work, I don’t know. I had no idea how to reflect that in any creative capacity.

Sometimes it takes time, even years, to find that balance. I’d call it acceptance, actually: what to fight, when to fight, and what to accept.

Finding ways to scrape stuff together, and to keep going, feels useful. Not everything is a master success; it’s just ultimately this through-line of work that keeps going.

Yeah, but you know what? I don’t think that it was always this thing of, “Well, I’m just going to keep making stuff, no matter what.” I think at my core, and no matter what I want to think, I do have that commitment, and love, but I didn’t want to think that. I really thought in some ways art betrayed me, because I put so much of my emotion and soul and gut into it and it created more pain in some ways, when I didn’t sell it, or it didn’t go anywhere.

I really wanted to learn how to not make anything and not give a shit. I tried, “I am not going to make anything.” Of course, I wasn’t capable of that, but I really wanted to try to let go of that idea that I had to make things. Also, people say, “Oh yeah, I heard you came back from adversity, you can conquer the world, and you’re a warrior!” and this and that, and that’s such bullshit. I dealt with so much self-doubt after that last illness. Art (or adversity) doesn’t necessarily bring these miracles of spirit that people often think it does. Sometimes you’re just like, “No, man, I feel crushed, and I don’t necessarily feel like art is going to save my soul or take me out of this.” But, somehow, I do in the end believe that it kind of can. It’s very powerful, our own creativity. It can be very restorative and sometimes it’s your only companion on very solitary roads.
How to reinvent yourself

“Something needs to change, but I’m not sure what.” “I don’t feel like I’m growing anymore.” “This isn’t the life I imagined for myself.” “I just feel stuck.”

Sound familiar? It’s common to experience feelings of boredom, feel stuck, wonder if we’ve stopped growing, and question our path every now and then as life ebbs and flows. Sometimes those feelings are a normal part of the process and pass quickly, but other times they indicate that we are in need of a bigger change. When uncomfortable feelings and questions of doubt continue to bubble up to the surface, or intensify, it can be a sign that it’s time to re-evaluate our lives and the direction we’re headed in.
Here are a few signs it might be time to consider reinventing yourself:

1. **Your growth has plateaued.** Growth happens in seasons and is more intense during certain phases of our lives. However, if you’ve stopped growing as a person and a professional and feel bored, unchallenged and disinterested, you might need a change.

2. **Your life is no longer aligned with your values and goals.** At some point you stopped living the life you wanted and began to live the life you thought you were supposed to live. If your life is out of alignment with what you value and what you want to accomplish, it’s time to choose a new course—one that is fully yours.

3. **Your current life isn’t sustainable and is leading to exhaustion.** Living a life that leads to burnout will require reinvention at some point—either you choose to proactively reinvent yourself, or you will be forced to do so when you officially burn out and every area of your life is affected.

4. **Life circumstances provide an opportunity for change.** Sometimes we choose to hit pause and re-evaluate our lives, and other times we are asked to stop and recalibrate due to a change in circumstances. If life is giving you an opportunity to build off of the momentum of change to reinvent yourself, accept it.
5. **You are running toward something.** The purpose of reinvention is not to run away from something—your job, family, partner, city, or life. Reinvention is an opportunity to run toward something that has been calling you. If you have a clear idea of what you want to do next, it might be time to go for it.

6. **Your intuition tells you so.** Sometimes we just know it’s time for a change. Of course it’s not wise to uproot our entire lives based on a fleeting feeling, but don’t underestimate the power of your gut or intuition to hint that it’s time to reinvent.

7. **You’ve given it time and still feel the same way.** If you’re unsure, set a date on the calendar that allows you a reasonable period of time to carefully consider how reinvention could affect all the parts of your life. If time passes and you still have the desire to reinvent, it’s likely that you’re ready.

This list isn’t exhaustive or final. So, it’s important to spend time with yourself, reflect on a regular basis, lean into your own understanding, and practice trusting your intuition as your voice becomes more clear.

**On assessing what to change**

Once we make the commitment to self-reinvention, we may want to dive in headfirst or, surprisingly, we might find ourselves resisting the very change we desire. As human beings, we are averse to risk, so know
that it’s a normal part of the process to find yourself avoiding or even sabotaging the change you set out to make. This doesn’t mean you should give up, however.

If you encounter a mental block around what to change, it can be helpful to understand that most decisions we make are not final and that if we choose to make a change and it doesn’t lead to the outcome we want, we can choose a different course of action. Additionally, when we feel paralyzed and are unsure about taking the first step, it can help to start small. Each action you take will give you more information and help you move on to bigger decisions about your life.

There’s no “right” way to reinvent yourself, but following the steps below can help you make a plan to move forward.

**Build a foundation for change by identifying your “North Stars.”** We’re easily able to list what doesn’t satisfy us, but how do we know what to move toward? What do you want more of in your life? Defining your North Stars can be a helpful way to lay the foundation for future decision-making to ensure that what you’re choosing aligns with what you want more of.

**Take action:**

- Grab your notebook or journal and find a quiet place to sit and write.
- Think about the past 6–12 months and answer this question: What has energized and fulfilled you?
- List out 3–5 words that reflect what energizes and fulfills you. These will be your North Stars.
• Define each of the words you listed out. What do they mean to you, on a personal level?
• Describe what these words would look like if they manifested in your life?
• Keep your North Stars where you can remember and revisit them on a regular basis, and edit them as needed.

How to sustain change

As you begin the transformative journey of creating change in your life, it’s vital to set yourself up for success. Here are a few methods to help you continue on when you are tempted to give in to discouragement, or abandon ship altogether:

Remember your why and let your North Stars guide you. At some point, you will feel discouraged, question your new path, and wonder if you made the right choice. When this happens, revisit your North Stars and imagine how your life will feel once you have more of what you want.

Build change into your daily routine. What changes can you make in your day-to-day to have a calendar that reflects your priorities? Think about it in terms of the day-to-day changes, monthly goals, and quarterly goals that will help you get closer to the life you want.

You can’t do it alone. Enlist the help of key people who you trust and can lean on for encouragement, accountability, and feedback. Professional support can come in the form of therapists, formal mentors, and coaches. Personally, you could reach out to friends to schedule regular check-ins for accountability.
**Celebrate progress.** Every few weeks, ask yourself: What have been your wins or achievements? What insights have you had? What opportunities have arisen? These questions will help you focus on the progress you’ve made, and will build your confidence.

**Reinvention begins today**

Who you want to be is not out of reach. You could begin today. You can commit to change, start where you are, make a plan to move forward, and take action to reinvent yourself. If you’re ready to reinvent, don’t wait. As Mary Oliver writes in her poem *Moments,* “There is nothing more pathetic than caution / when headlong might save a life, / even, possibly, your own.”

*For more on how to fuel and sustain positive change in your life, read the full guide “How to reinvent yourself” at www.thecreativeindependent.com.*
"We’ve been conditioned to believe that there’s some kind of relationship between the creative life and dysfunctional mental health; that somehow there’s a correlation between the two. I don’t subscribe to that anymore because it’s just too exhausting. I’ve become really good about delegating and organizing my time. When you’re just an artist floating out there in the ether you’re made to believe that you have to create great art through pain and suffering. It isn’t true."

Sufjan Stevens on songwriting, collaboration, and the myth of the tortured artist
"My first priority is taking care of myself, and that’s a priority that I’m just starting to really understand. Mental health is important and I think the past year, for everyone, has been difficult on a lot of levels. I was going through a lot of personal things, and having those coincide with this major biennial was difficult. It made me aware of how important it is for me to take care of myself and figure out what that means: 15-minute meditations in the morning, hiking, being with my family, really simple things that are therapeutic for me."

Erin Christovale on curating

“I think maybe that’s another piece of advice I can offer—know when to take care of yourself. If you feel like you need to stop, then stop. If you don’t take care of yourself in your personal life, your real life, you won’t be any good to anyone else.”

Musician and muse Cindy Wilson on creating the world you want to be in
“I think the most important thing is to be absolutely focused, and to read and nourish yourself as much as possible. And not to let yourself be too swayed or distracted. For example, I love Instagram. It can be super inspiring, but mostly it’s mentally polluting. It’s very important just to make sure that my antennae is right, to be aware of what things are a good influence and who or what is positive to my imagination and my mental health. We have to think about things in the long-term as well, don’t we? Just be clear about your intentions and try to develop tools that can help carry you the full distance. Being an artist is a long journey.”

Visual artist Laëtitia Badaut Haussmann on maintaining focus
“When I am deep in a project—especially one where maintaining momentum is crucial—is when I’m most likely to start ignoring self care, eating a handful of chips instead of dinner, working ‘til midnight, and getting up at five. What I do to stay in balance requires reasoning with the part of myself that insists that I don’t have time to rest. I have to remind myself that it will only take 20 minutes to cook a decent meal. I also have to remind myself to go walk for 40-60 minutes and listen to a Dharma talk or a podcast that feels nutritive, and ‘feed’ myself that way, because my creativity needs fuel to be sustained, too.”

Music critic and author Jessica Hopper on balancing health and productivity
"Taking care of yourself, self-nurturing, self-love, it’s all so important. It’s important to truly invest in that, whether it’s in your diet or in your behavior. Also, affection is so important. Nurturing, experiencing touch, having a community and an intimate tribe that is handling your emotional needs in a way that is uplifting rather than congesting—it’s important. I think being touched or hugged, whether you do it through dancing or massage or an intimate partner, or whether you have pets, tactile contact is a form of self-nurturing that everyone needs. If you don’t honor this area of your needs, it could show up in your work in other ways that are usually unhealthy or unhappy."

Musician and mystic Laraaji on meditation and creativity
“If you work alone with a computer, something really important for your mental health and your productivity is to figure out how are you going to have interactions with other people. How are you going to satisfy your other human needs beyond working? There are a lot of ways to manage that, whether it be taking walk breaks or hitting up your friends. I think it’s important just to reach out to other people who are also working freelance and be like, ‘Hey, want to work in the same space?’ Just to have that kind of flow. It makes you a lot more cognizant of what you need to make yourself mentally happy. I would say that if you don’t ignore those signs then that’s a good way to prevent burnout. Your work will also improve if you remember to take breaks, clear your head, and not get lost in it.”

Digital artist and game designer Terrifying Jellyfish on making games out of food
Do you make music full-time, or do you find it helpful to do other types of work?

I’ve always worked and done music stuff at the same time. The past two years were the first time I actually quit my job and did music full-time, but previously—for the past 15 years or so—I would do both. I would work full-time and then go away to do gigs on the weekends or on short tips, then come back to work.

How did it feel to not do that anymore? To give up the day job?

It was weird. I didn’t do well with it, let’s put it that way. It just wasn’t good for me. I learned that I’m a person who

Excerpted from a longer conversation with T. Cole Rachel, read the full article on www.thecreativeindependent.com
needs structure. With no structure, shit kind of flew out the window, basically.

I quickly started realizing that. I’ve never really been much of a drinker, but over the past few years, man, I was wondering, “Am I becoming an alcoholic by default because I have nothing better to do?” It got really depressing. This is just my personal experience. This is not a comment on what the culture of electronic music is like or anything, but it was just too easy. Me and my friend Dave were talking about it yesterday. It’s like when you go to a work party and there’s an open bar. What happens? People get fucking trashed. Right? If you’re a DJ, your entire job is an open bar. Every night. It’s almost encouraged. So it’s hard to manage. And then you combine that with any mild social anxiety, and what’s the first thing that anyone does? They fucking drink. It becomes a cycle.

I started too late, in regards to DJing full-time. Starting at 38, not a wise choice. I’ve been DJing internationally for a long time, but to suddenly be doing only that, every weekend, it’s just really taxing. The hours are brutal. It’s like I’m always playing at around 3:00 to 5:00 am. Those are not healthy hours for anybody. If you could sleep all night and then get up early and go to your set, then it might be OK, but usually you are traveling for 10 hours and you arrive with only a couple of hours to eat something and rest and then it’s go time. You have to be super regimented and disciplined, in my opinion, to handle that in a healthy way and to not drink, and not do drugs.

Most artists have the fantasy of making a living from their art and not having to do anything else, but the reality of that can be much different. I think it’s great to talk about the fact that not everyone is actually well-suited for that.

Yeah. I have some friends who I’ve always been envious of—people who left it all out there on the table, where there was this element of really living and dying by your art. At some point I just realized that I didn’t know if I could really do that. I found myself going to a dark place, especially with all that extra time to think about things. I was watching documentaries on people like Chet Baker, who was a genius and a fuck-up. People just let him be that way. Like, talented as fucking all hell. But dude, he’s a junkie, man. And it’s like, he lived that life. And he lived it until he died.
My problem was that you start identifying with these things as a part of the creative process. That somehow you need to be fucked up or that it’s helping you or that you need it in order to cope. You’re just putting all this pressure on yourself, because you need to do something. This is your only job now. Be creative. I’m lucky. I have a good family. I have a good support system. But it just really fucked with my head, basically.

**What was the solution, ultimately? Did you go back to having a day job? Or did you put yourself on some sort of a schedule?**

Well, I tried putting myself on a schedule. I needed some kind of external responsibility. As we’re speaking, I’m currently working remotely on a design job. I am basically going to go back to that. I needed a change. I was having this conversation all the time about not liking certain things about my life. And I’m like, “Dude, when have I ever not made a change when I didn’t like something this much?” So I was like, “Fuck it. I have to make a change. Because if not, I don’t know where this is gonna end up.”

I was doing a lot of dumb shit that I have never done in the past. It was getting so extreme that even my friends were like, “Dude, what the fuck is wrong with you? Are you okay?” It was mostly just because I had nothing fucking better to do. I know I’m not that person. I don’t want to be that person. So I had to get my shit together, and for me that meant going back to work.

There are so many things that can get in your head. People have this idealized version of who you are because of the music that you make, or the art that you make, but I don’t necessarily want to be that person all the time. So you’re constantly in a struggle with tearing things down that you’ve created. It can be a really destructive, confusing process.

I like doing things other than just making and playing music. And at a certain point I realized that I needed to be doing more of that stuff. I’m always gonna make music. That’s never gonna stop. I’m always gonna DJ. It’s just that the way that part of my life has been structured, at least the way it is right now, is just not suitable for me. It’s one thing to be a crazy fuck-up when you’re younger, but not at 40. It just doesn’t work. It makes you tired. And when you’re always tired, you do dumb shit.
Feed your body, feed your brain

Our bodies and minds are interconnected. When our gut and organs are under stress, we will likely feel tired, less focused, and irritable. The best way to keep our bodies healthy is through the foods we eat.

The largest filter, barrier, and converter between the outside world and our delicate internal environment is our liver. And even though it’s a powerhouse in cleaning the blood, protecting the heart, helping the digestive system, and converting nutrients to exactly the mix we need to survive and thrive, too often our lifestyle choices create a toxic and sluggish liver. This can translate to the mind in the form of toxic thoughts, anxiety, cravings, or fatigue—leaving no room for the creative process to unfold.
The brain feeds on glucose, the simple sugar molecule contained in fruits and vegetables. A lack of this “good” glucose will signal your adrenals to start pouring out adrenaline, which in turn will cue your liver to release its glucose reserves in order to prevent your brain from exhaustion. This flood of adrenaline is corrosive for your whole system and will put you in a stress response—consistently activating the sympathetic “fight or flight” nervous system.

**This means:** increase the amount of good natural glucose from fruits and vegetables in your diet, to keep your brain cool and prepare it for steady, creative performance. Load up on potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, yams, leafy greens, spinach, kale, dates, bananas, mangoes, figs, berries, apricots, and apples. Sprinkle some herbs over your food, and include raw organic local honey in your dressings. Try to cut down on fats and proteins, and observe how that affects your energy levels and general feeling of wellbeing.

**Get regular exercise**

For tens of thousands of years, humans’ sympathetic “fight or flight” stress response was crucial to our survival, quickly fueling our muscles with energy so that we could run away from danger. Today our stress levels (and feelings of danger) are consistently higher than ever, and yet these feelings are barely ever followed up by a physical response. As a result, all that ready-to-use energy gets stuck inside our muscles and tissues, leading to inner tension and, eventually, disease.

**This means:** work out, move your body, stretch yourself! A flexible body creates a flexible mind. The yogis practice asana (a sequence of yoga poses) so that afterwards, they can sit in
meditation with an undisturbed mind. Similarly, it makes sense to work out before sitting down for a long studio session.

**Practice mindfulness**

The first step to change something, is to notice it. Learn to check in with yourself regularly, even if that means setting reminders on your phone. Ask yourself multiple times each day: “How am I? What do I need to do to have a better experience?” Then do that! It will also help you identify the most effective ways to change your state of mind. Get to know yourself, without judgement.

As you check in with yourself, treat yourself as you would treat a good friend—be kind, compassionate, forgiving, and patient. It sounds simple, but once we pay attention to our thought patterns, it’s shocking how frequently we allow negative, destructive thoughts to sneak in.

**Breathe in, breathe out**

Besides checking in with your mind and general wellbeing, learn to check in on your breath. Keep reminding yourself: “How is my breath?” Deep belly breathing through the nose has a grounding and calming effect, while erratic, shallow breathing patterns will lead to erratic thinking.
When inhaling through the mouth, the air will typically only reach the upper parts of the lungs (chest breathing), stimulating the “fight or flight” nervous system. By inhaling through the nose, the air comes in cleaner and warmer, allowing it to also reach the lower parts of our lungs (belly breathing), stimulating the “rest & digest” nervous system. At the same time, the exhalation generally has a calming effect.

**This means:** try to inhale deeply through the nose, and practice longer exhales than inhales. This will automatically calm your mind and bring about a more relaxed and focused state. This also works great before speaking or performing in public.

Here’s a breathing exercise to try:

- For five minutes, take an inhale on two counts through the nose and exhale on four counts.
- Try to feel into your body: the soles of your feet, the shirt on the skin, your belly moving with every breath.

**Stay well-hydrated**

Staying hydrated will help with concentration, digestion, and to keep your mind in a good place. Always carry water with you. If you find regular water boring, try squeezing in some lemon, or add sliced apple, cucumber, orange, and/or mint.

**Avoid alcohol & substances**

Be mindful with alcohol and other substances. What can feel like a little helper to get you “in the right mood” can cost you in the long run by undermining your physical and mental health.
This means: try to remove alcohol and other substances from your daily routine. Instead, drink lots of water or other hydrating beverages such as coconut water, or try mate tea or green tea to keep your energy levels up. If you’re in a social drinking situation, you can sip on a longdrink glass of sparkling water with some ice and lemon.

Don’t compare yourself

Although most of us know that social media can exacerbate our feelings of isolation and lack, many artists think that their success depends on their presence on social platforms. They feel an expectation to feed the growing hunger for new content, while simultaneously having to stay informed with the activities of their peers. This behaviour not only takes up an overwhelming amount of time and attention, but can also give the sense that everyone else is doing better than you are.

However, authenticity and individuality is what makes an artist interesting. Paying too much attention to what others want or do, will undermine the self-confidence needed to create something unique. And while the act of comparing ourselves feeds the desire for recognition and peer validation, it strips away our innate desire to experiment and learn, which are the building blocks of a creative process.

Try these practices if social media tends to get the better of you:

• Set a certain (limited!) time window aside for your daily social media bender
• Have a plan for how you want to spend time while you’re logged in (create a post, check an event page, respond to comments, etc.)
• Unfollow any profiles that give you the slightest
feeling of anger, frustration, or envy
• Remove your phone from the bedroom, or use Airplane Mode at night
• Do not check social media first thing in the morning or before you go to sleep

A few healthy routines to try

In the morning: Detox your liver

During our sleep, the liver works incredibly hard to deal with everything thrown at it throughout the day. Its main job is to detox and regenerate our body by neatly wrapping up the toxins in our system so they may be disposed of at the end of a good night’s sleep. That’s why it’s so crucial to flush out our system first thing in the morning!

When you first wake up:

1. Drink ½ to 1 squeezed lemon in a large glass of warm water
   BENEFITS: Doing this helps your liver and digestive tract. It flushes out the toxins collected in your liver, alkalizes your system, gets your digestion started, and delivers a nice load of vitamin C to help the immune system and nervous system repair.

2. Drink pure, fresh celery juice on an empty stomach
   BENEFITS: Doing this enhances the entire immune system by drawing out toxins and strengthening the liver’s defense mechanisms. It starves, dismantles, and flushes out bacteria & viruses while hydrating organs and cells.
Tips for staying healthy while traveling

• Get fresh smoothies and juices whenever you can! Avoid added sugar and dairy; stick to mixed fruits and vegetables
• Cut down on fat and protein, while increasing vegetables to help the liver
• Remember: Fruits are good, while sugar is not! (highly inflammatory)
• Keep a few bottles of water on hand, and drink them before sleep, in the morning, and with added protein powder as a meal replacement if necessary

Tips for staying healthy in flu season

• Be mindful of what you touch; wash your hands regularly
• Keep fingers and hands away from your face and eyes (don’t rub your eyes!)
• When dining out during flu season, it’s better to order piping-hot dishes to kill off viruses from kitchen staff, instead of ordering raw dishes / salads
• For immune support during air travel and other situations where you could catch a virus, try liquid zinc or Quantum Health TheraZinc Oral Spray (it comes in a 2 oz. travel size)
General tips for feeling your best

• Papaya and pineapple are great digestives after a meal (enzymes!)
• Melons should be eaten separately from other foods to avoid bloating and digestive problems
• Potatoes are good for you! (esp. cooled down potatoes, as they feed good gut bacteria)
• Eat only when hungry, and wait a minimum of three hours between meals
• Eat a light dinner for restorative sleep and good energy in the morning
• Leave at least three hours between dinner and bedtime for digestion

Try nourishing the mind with healing sounds

What we listen to influences us on a cellular level. Many people have radio or TV constantly running in the background, with people yelling or incessant “buy this, do that” messages, and don’t realise how toxic it can be for the already stressed-out mind.

Vice versa, listening to healing or relaxing positive sounds—such as alpha brainwave music, chants, or peaceful piano playlists—can turn our day and attitude around. Be mindful of the things you allow to enter your senses by establishing a certain “hygiene of the senses.”
Make healthy eating a routine

No more excuses for bad-food days! Use this staple shopping list and some recipes to prepare healthy smoothies to keep your mind and body strong.

**Staple shopping list:**

- Frozen bananas (you can buy them frozen, or peel, cut, bag, and freeze your own ripe bananas)
- Frozen blueberries / raspberries / strawberries
- Frozen mango
- Frozen kale / spinach (portioned in small bits)
- Canned coconut milk
- Packaged coconut water (no added sugar)
- Packaged nut milk (almond, pistachio, or other favorite)
- Dried dates
- Hemp seeds / flax seeds / chia seeds
- Flax oil (also great for salads—only use cold, never heat it up)
- Coconut oil
Cacao powder (raw)
Maca powder (energizing, nourishing—strong flavor, use in small amounts)
Peanut butter (no added sugar)
Himalayan salt

Note that it's best to buy organic ingredients whenever possible.

Basic smoothie formulas

Banana + orange + dates + cinnamon (+ opt. cacao powder), or

Banana + straw/blue/raspberries + dates + spinach/kale, or

Banana + mango + spinach/kale.

+ liquid: add nut/oat/coconut milk (heavier) or water/coconut water (lighter)

+ try adding a small amount of nut butter (eg. peanut butter, almond butter)

+ try adding superfoods (cacao powder, maca powder, hemp seeds, flax seeds)
A few recommendations that have helped others feel healthier, and might help you, too

• My failures
• Talking to my mum
• Water
• Facing things about myself that are very difficult.
  In human nature it is very difficult to face yourself when ego and pride are so prevalent. This is the main reason I can create: I have to draw on the very things that make me most uncomfortable.
  — Electronic musician, producer, and DJ Jlin on learning from failure

• Go running / exercise while the moon is out.
• As soon as you wake up drink one huge glass of water & stretch for 30 minutes while listening to a new piece of music.
• Cook something that you’ve never made before and share it with a friend. Apologize and laugh when it tastes awful.
• Give yourself one sleep-day pass, which you can exchange for one day of solid sleeping. You are allowed to use this only once a year, on your hardest day.
  — Musician Circuit des Yeux on finding your true self through your work
• “I can’t recommend journaling enough. When I’m feeling lost at sea, creatively stuck or depressed, picking up a pen and just scrawling nonsense in a spiral notebook is so soothing. I’ve journaled my way into great inspiration for scripts, funny anecdotes for my stand-up, deep realizations and truths about myself—you name it. I’ve also used it as an exercise to ground myself when I’m having anxiety. It helps focus my crazy energy.”
   — Comedian and writer Brooke Van Poppelen on being funny for a living

• “I think taking care of your desire matters, because to make new work and to tackle big questions can be terrifying, and you have to have something that is bigger than your fear to invest in, and to get you through that.

   Also, have fun. Play. Have tea with your friends. Stop worrying about your schedule. That’s how you get through. Step outside of yourself and your life occasionally. That is nourishment.”
   — Theater artist Kaneza Schaal on creating your own notion of what theater can be
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