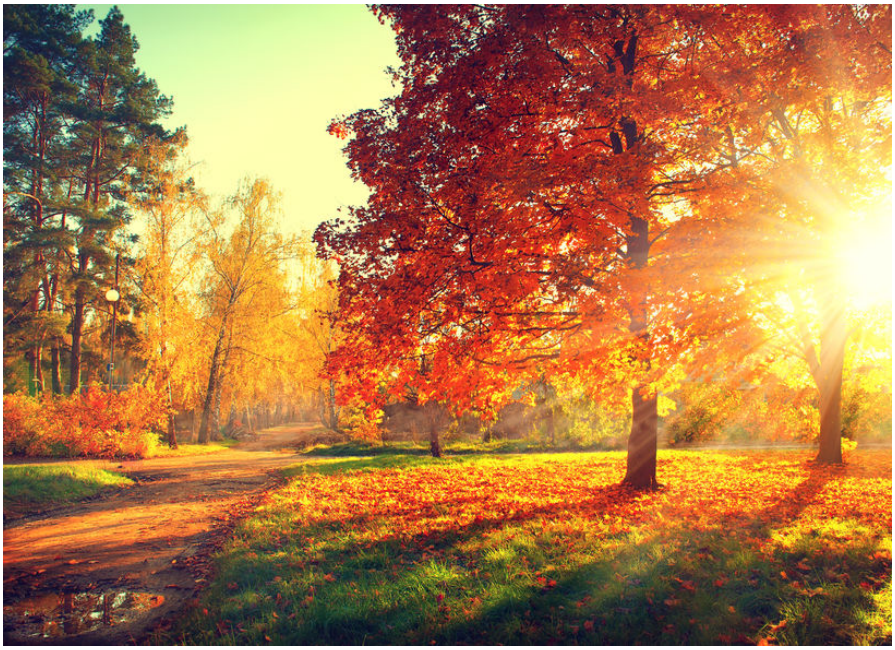

Tips for Staying Healthy in Autumn 2026

by Elson Haas MD

As the climate begins to shift with the coming of Autumn, it is wise to adjust our lifestyle choices especially in regard to nutrition, exercise, stress management and sleep patterns. This can also be a time when our mindset is affected with the lessening of daylight and cooler weather; so, ideally we find ways to enhance our supportive attitude.

Here's a Summary of my 10 Tips for Staying Healthy in Autumn

1. Open up to the Harvest of your Year
2. As our foundation, our Foods and Diet are an important focus now.
3. Exercise activity is crucial now as in any season. Stretch at Home.
4. Which Nutritional Supplements are useful at this time of year?
5. Some kind of Detoxification is a good idea for early-to-mid Autumn
6. In Chinese medicine, the Lungs and Large Intestine require our attention
7. This is a good time to deepen and clarify Close Relationships
8. Open to the Creative Spirit
9. Rest and Kindle your inner flame to protect you from the cooler times
10. Preventing and Treating Colds and the Flu

1. As with the Gardens in the Autumn season, open up to the Harvest of your year from the seeds you have planted for your life, and be willing to work hard and discipline yourself as you head into a new season. If you are a student (we are all students of life), get back to your studies. Usually, it is time to shift from the fun and laziness of summer to the focus and education of Autumn. Food-wise, Nature is so giving, and it helps to be receptive to her and

what the Earth has to offer, especially in these next couple months. What do we have to give to life for all the energy, love, and beauty I hope we all receive?

2. Foundation and Fortification with our Foods and Diet are an important focus now. Again, this is Harvest time and there are a great many foods—apples and walnuts, sunflower seeds, zucchini and other squash, cabbages, peppers and tomatoes, plus many grains and beans. Learn some new recipes and enjoy good foods. Most of us need more protein and heat-generating foods as the months get colder, even the energizing spicy peppers such as cayenne and chilies. This will keep our blood and energy moving.

3. Exercise activity is crucial now as in any season. As the weather cools, stretching is even more important, as is having indoor exercises we can do. Yoga and other flexibility-enhancing movements are helpful at keeping us youthful. Remember, we feel as young as our spine is flexible. Our weight-lifting work and aerobic activities are vital to staying fit and toned, as well as maintaining strength to support our immune function and circulation. A vital body rarely gets sick, especially as we support our immune health.

4. Nutritional supplements are often useful this time of year. Many of my patients add some nutrients that support immune function so as not to pick up whatever is going around as the weather cools.

- Taking some echinacea now is helpful, as is the Chinese herb, astragalus. Both help support immunity.
- Some people prefer the use of mushrooms such as maitake and reshiitake for immune support.
- Vitamin D intake and adequate body levels appear to protect us from some of the Covid problems if we're exposed. Maintaining daily vitamins C, A and E along with selenium and zinc is also immune protective and helps clear our body of certain toxins.
- Roots are helpful at tonifying our body at this time. Ginseng is good for building strength and endurance. Burdock root is good for the skin and lungs, an area of focus for this season.
- See the Autumn section of my book *Staying Healthy with the Seasons* for more information.

5. Detoxification is a good idea for early autumn and can provide a great benefit. I typically do a 3-week cleanse/detox program myself every September/October, and encourage you all to consider what you can do to give your body system a little break. We can also focus on weight reduction in October, and last year I did a program called *Weight Release: Healing Our Relationship to Food*. You can find that in the Courses section of my website – www.elsonhaasmd.com. I also have a *Purification Process membership* that includes that and all the other detox programs.LINK
Can you take a break from some of your routine habits, like caffeine, alcohol, or sugar? Doing an effective *Detox Diet* or avoiding sugar, wheat and dairy for a couple weeks (as I write about in *The False Fat Diet* book about food reactions) is often quite revealing and helps us to feel better, lighter and more youthful with greater energy. Since it is getting cooler this season, we will need to exercise and use a sauna or steam as a means to enhance sweat and clear toxins. I believe that regular sweating is important to health and longevity.

6. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Metal (Air) is the element of the Autumn and the focus is on the organs of the Lungs and Large intestine.
We need to watch out for dryness (the climate that supports Autumn) and mucus in our bodies. The emotion that can affect this element is worry or grief, so we want to relax and meditate and dismiss any worry. Other associations are skin/hair, nose and the sense of smell, the color white (silver, too), sound of weeping and the food flavor - pungent or spicy. In TCM, this is the time to prepare for the cold season and do what we can to prevent getting sick. Gathering our fuel and food, being aware of our breath, and exercising regularly offers a good basis for our health, Overindulgence can lead to congestion and toxicity, as well as constipation and the clogging of the nose and sinuses. This leads then to upper respiratory infections as the germs grow in the mucus and then inflame the membranes. Staying clean and clear this season along with a healthy immune system will help keep you well. Try a facial steam and breathe in the herbal mist (you can use mints, rosemary, chamomile, lemon verbena, and other herbs) to help clear the sinuses.

7. Relationships are important to all of us. This is a good time to deepen and clarify our love and family connections. This helps us discover more about our own needs and those close to us, as well as learn to listen to them (both the needs and the people). Also, learn to be alone and listen to your inner guidance and truth. If things are out of sorts or you're ill, tune into that message and how your deeper being is guiding you. That's a good part of the health ideas of my topic, *Peace Medicine*.
Some folks focus relationship time on their work, computers and TV, or other electronic devices. Can you still your mind chatter, and let your body breathe deeply to your soul? Give it a try and your spirit will be calmed and can also fly free of the burdens of time.

8. Open to the Creative Spirit. We can receive new ideas and actions necessary to fulfill our purpose and move us forward in our life. This can help to improve motivation with new energy and excitement for life. This could be writing about past experiences or our future goals, working on a book or personal story, reading a self-help book and applying it to improve our life, or taking up a new exercise. In other words, start a program now that you can develop and work on into the colder, darker months.

9. Take a rest now because the demanding holiday season is just around the corner. Do not burn your batteries out before November. Kindle your inner flame and firepower, which will protect you from the invasion of harsh climates and germs. The winter blues come partly from a loss of this fire energy. Shifting and balancing with the **Seasons is vital to Staying Healthy.**

10. If you start to get a cold or the flu, it is best to take action quickly. Here's my cold and flu buster program.

- I start with 500-1,000 mg of vitamin C 4-6 times daily and even hourly until feeling better, and vitamin D3, 5000 IUs twice daily.
- Increased doses of vitamin A (not beta-carotene) 25,000 –30,000 IUs 3 times daily for just 3–4 days and then lower that dosage to 10 –

20,000 IUs twice daily for about a week (then take a break since excess vitamin A can have some toxicity if taken too long).

- I also use fresh garlic - several small to medium cloves at a time dipped in honey and chewed; I may repeat this several times the first day. That is a spicy and aromatic natural antibiotic and immune defender; you can alternately use the odorless garlic caps, several three times daily if you do not want to smell, but they are not quite as effective. Or you can press several cloves of garlic into your bowl of soup before you eat, instead of eating the garlic straight.
- Echinacea and goldenseal alcohol extract can also be used to support immunity and the alcohol can cleanse and disinfect the membranes.
- Some help may be achieved with olive leaf extract or oregano oil as mild anti-viral herbs, taking a couple capsules 2-3 times daily.
- Of course, drink lots of water, herbal teas, and hot soup.

As always - Stay Healthy with every Season!

Dr. Elson