3 STEPS TO BEATING
LOW MOOD, STRESS,
ANXIETY AND
DEPRESSION,
AND
BRINGING BACK YOUR
SPARK

LEARN HOW TO REMOVE THE
FOG, BALANCE YOUR
EMOTIONS, GAIN CONTROL OF
YOUR EATING AND GET BACK
TO YOU

Julie Hodgson- Improving mental health & mood naturally

Hi, my name is julie and I'm a qualified nutritionist and personal trainer specialising is mental health, mood and depression. I work with women helping them improve their health and wellbeing through personalised nutrition and lifestyle practices.

Welcome to my 3 steps to beating low mood, anxiety and depression, and bringing back your spark.

BUT BEFORE WE START....

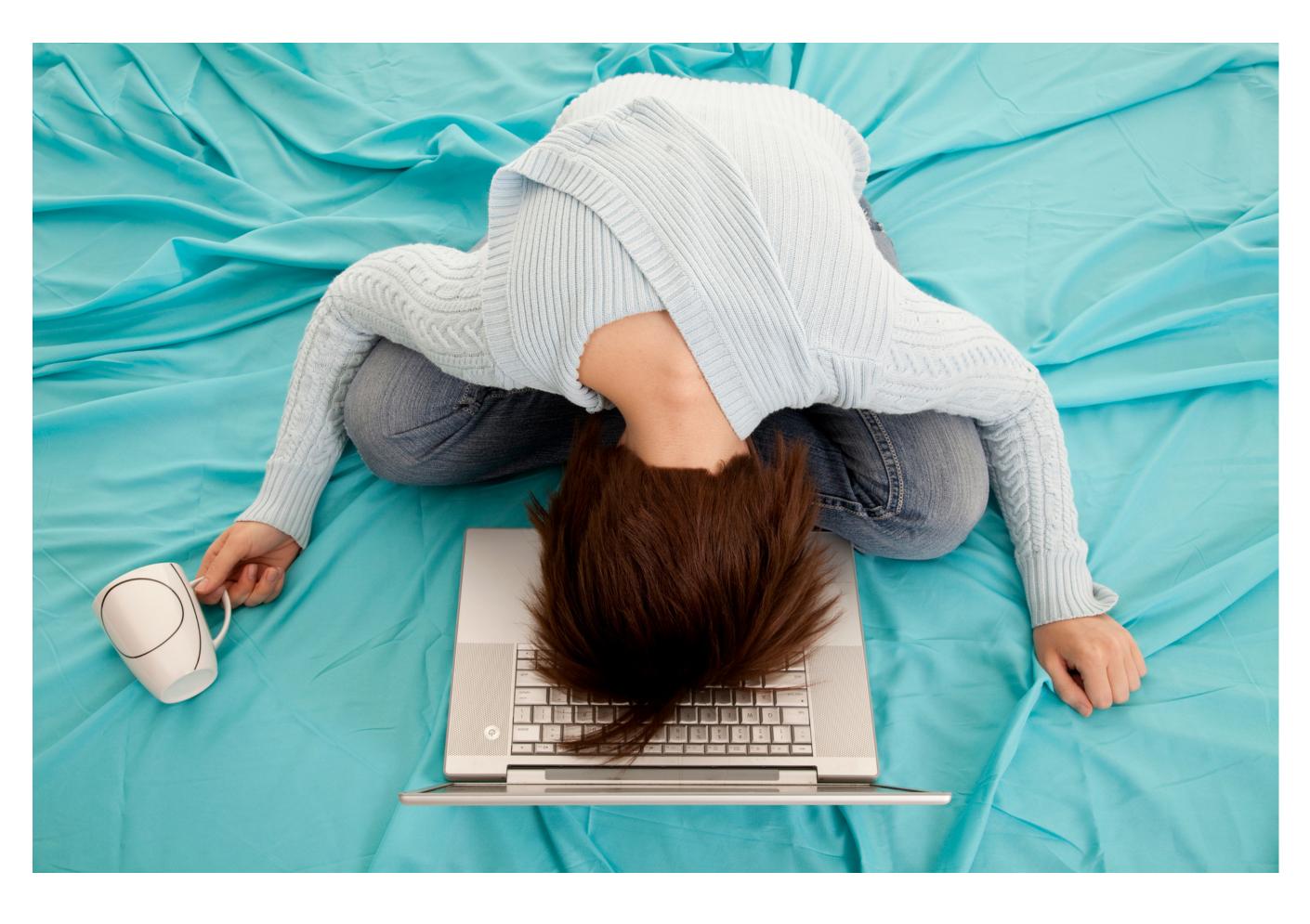
Let's just make sure you are in the right place.

# Do you feel like this?...



Moody, irritable, or irrational?

## Or like this?...



Exhausted, flat, foggy, fed up, or tearful?

## Or like this?...



Anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed?



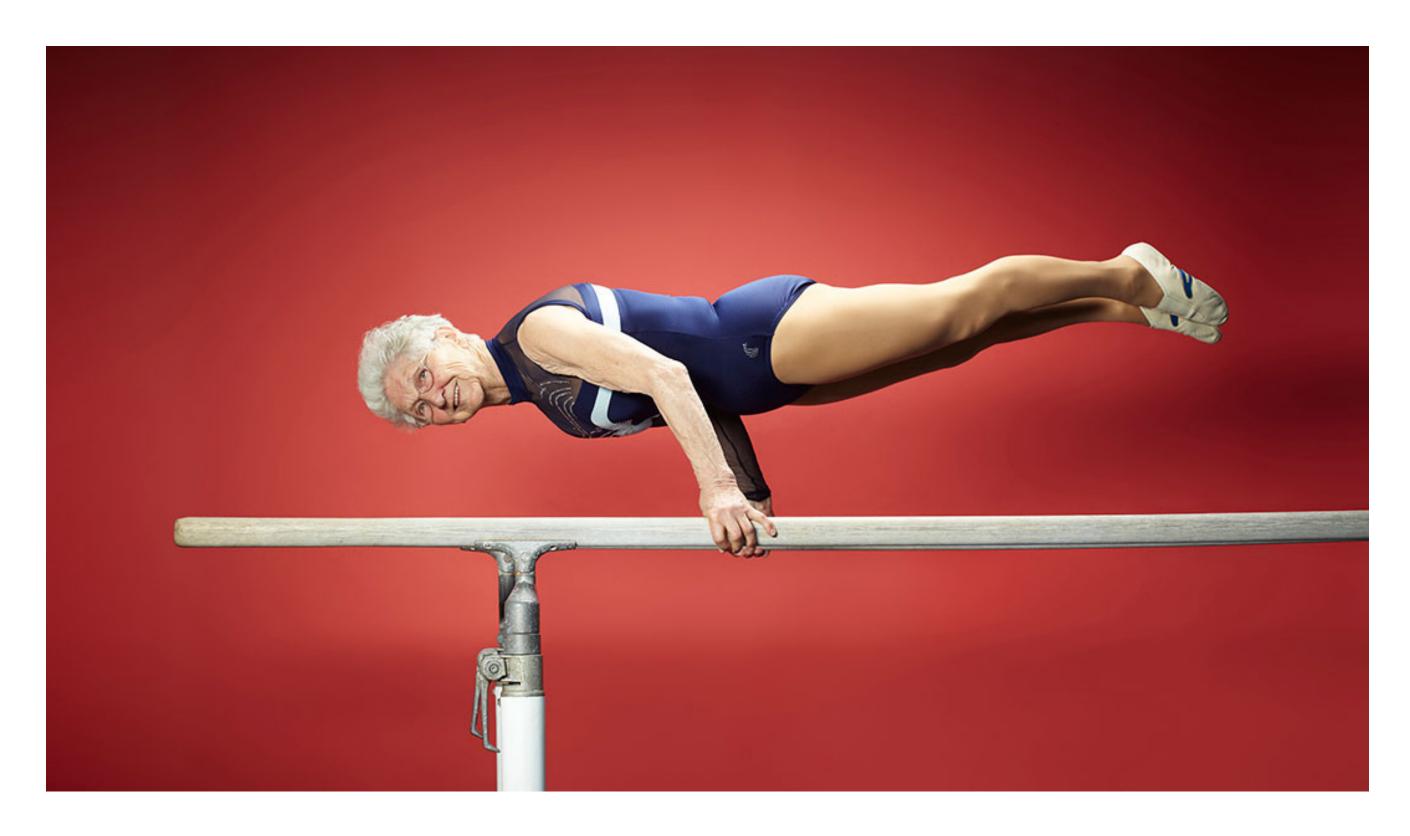
Like this?:(

If you have any of these symptoms, don't worry I am here to tell you there is lots you can do to get you feeling like you again!

I'm going to introduce you to my 3 steps that will help you increase your energy, gain control of your emotions, improve your mood whilst instilling a sense of wellbeing and happiness.

And in case you have been putting up with this for a while I wanted to remind you what it feels like to remove the fog, have more energy, stable moods, and a good sense of wellbeing.....

# Energy and vitality



Having enough energy and vitality to do all the things you want to do and live your life to the full.

Although I can't promise you'll be able to do this!:)

# Clarity and focus



Remove the fog and get your brain back so you can reach your potential.....

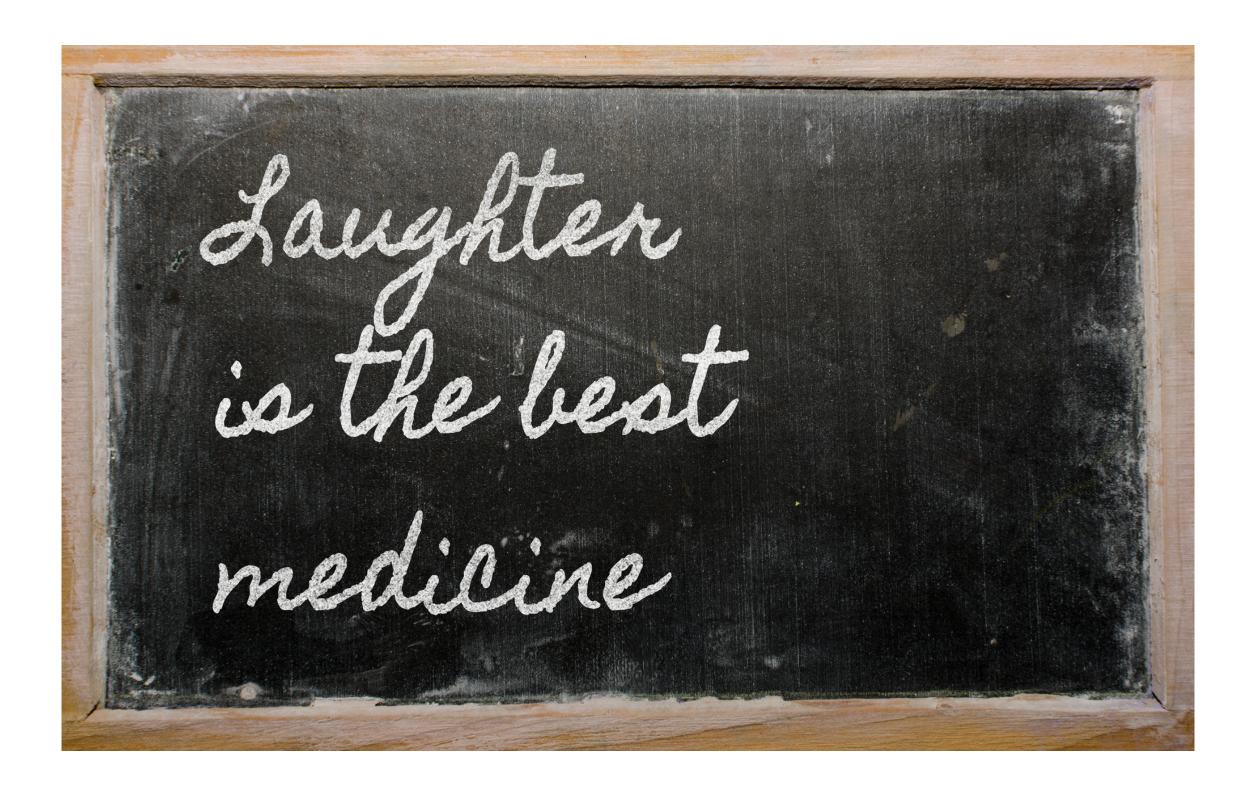
In whatever you need your brain for!

### Calm and Peace



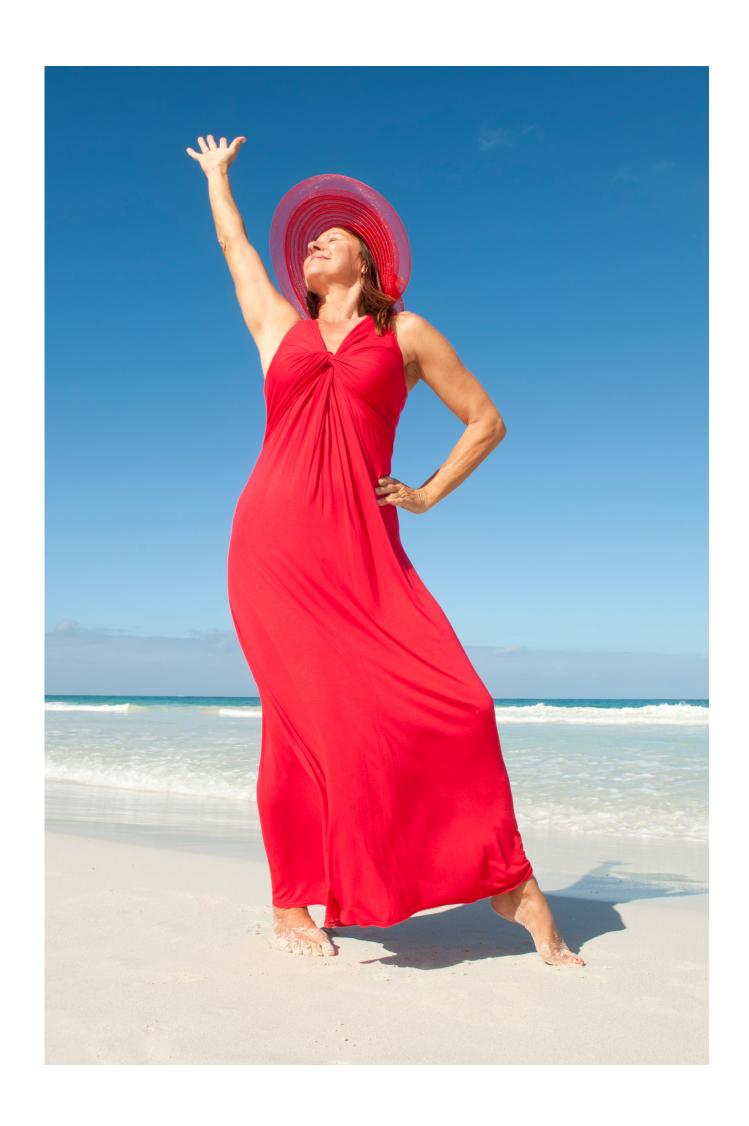
Find a sense of calm, and experience stable emotions so you feel in control and ready to take life on!

### Joy



Bring Joy back into your life and find fun and laughter again.

## Sense of wellbeing & confidence.



Feeling happy and confident in your own skin.

Definitely NO dieting - just knowing you are nourished, healthy and fit.

## Sound Impossible?

I used to think so too. When you feel stressed, or overwhelmed, or low, and keep trying to eat better or make yourself relax, it can feel like this is just the way you are and you just have to put up with it.

But I am here to tell you that you don't have to put up with it, and this is not the way it has to be!

My 3 steps to helping you remove the fog, balance your emotions and get back to you are designed to tackle the root cause of low mood, irritability, stress, anxiety and depression through personalised nutrition, lifestyle support and functional testing.

The 3 steps



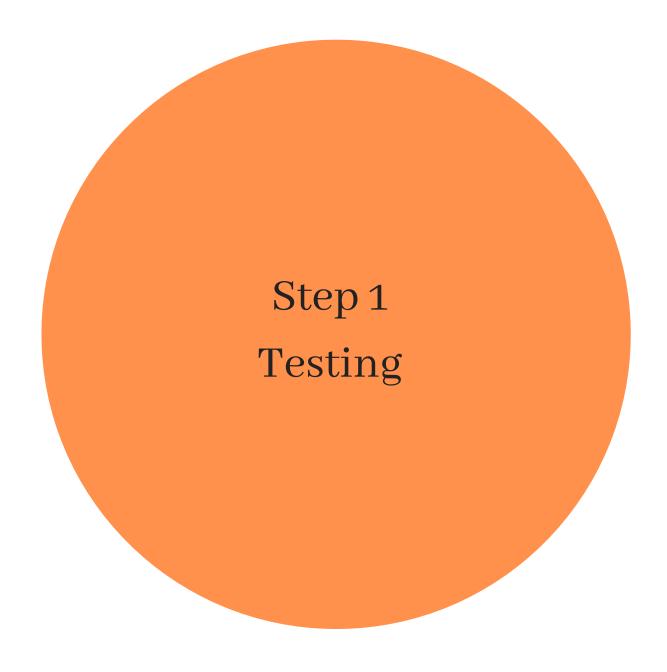
Get to the root cause and identify underlying imbalances contributing to YOUR symptoms



Eat right to optimise blood sugar balance, digestion, brain health, and support your nervous system and emotional stability.



Nurture the lifestyle habits that will instil a sense of wellbeing and happiness, and help you maintain your results for life.

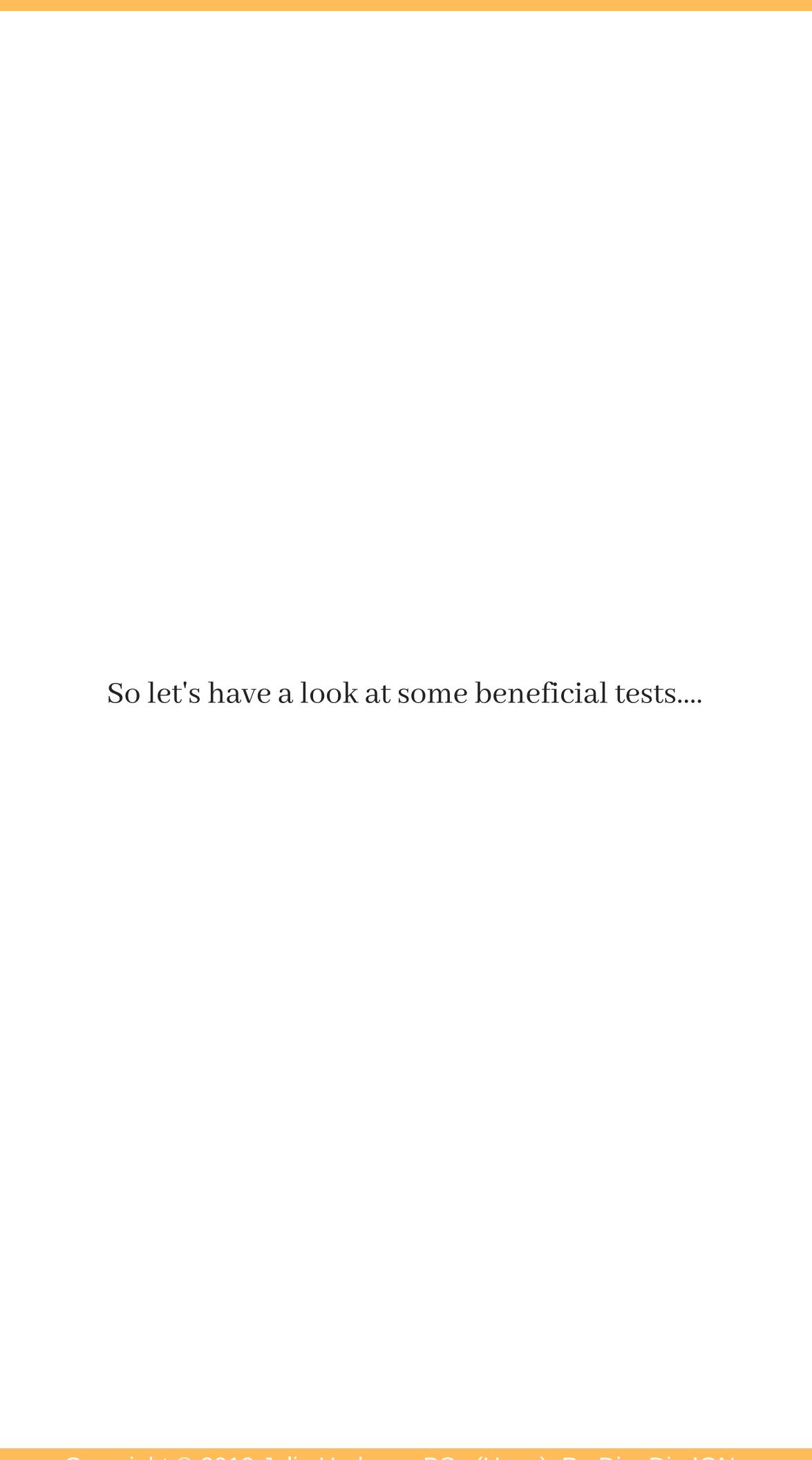


Get to the root cause and identify underlying imbalances contributing to YOUR symptoms

Sometimes it's just a matter of optimising an individuals diet and lifestyle. Very often balancing blood sugar, putting in place the correct macro and micro nutrients, and incorporating stress management techniques makes the world of difference. Other times we need to dig a little deeper.

When I work with clients, as well as taking a full medical history and go through all their symptoms, clients undertake a full nutritional evaluation. This includes both urine and blood testing so we can gain an understanding of their own unique diet and supplementation needs, as well as assess other biomarkers of health.

Testing allows you to assess and identify any nutritional imbalances and consider how they may contribute to your symptoms and health concerns.



#### Vitamin & minerals

This is some of the most common deficiencies shown to affect mood and well-being.

Some of these are available on the NHS, and you can also pay for private testing.

Depending on your symptoms some valuable tests to include are;

Vitamin D – Studies show a direct link between improved levels of depression and vitamin D levels in the body. A large number of the population are also deficient in vitamin D.

Zinc – low levels are shown in people with depression. Studies also show the lower the zinc the more severe the depression.

Vitamin B12 — Common deficiency symptoms are mood issues, depression, tingling and fatigue. B12 is only found in animal products so if you are vegetarian, you need regular testing. Even if you do eat meat you may have difficulty absorbing B12 so it's important to know your levels.

Vitamin B6 – Required for the production of the neurotransmitters serotonin, GABA, and dopamine, vitamin B6 plays a very important role in mental health. Deficiency is associated with irritability, anxiety and depression.

Iron – Very common in menstruating women will cause listlessness and fatigue. (ask for a ferritin test or full iron panel as this is the most accurate measure of your iron stores)

A couple of others that may also play a part in your symptoms – copper, magnesium, folate and selenium.

## Thyroid function

Thyroid function tests show how well your thyroid is working.

The thyroid is like the conductor in your body keeping everything running at an appropriate pace.

An underactive thyroid can manifest as depression, brain fog, anxiety, fatigue and constipation amongst other symptoms. Tests show how well your thyroid is working, how your body is converting and using the thyroid hormones, and how your immune system is interacting with your thyroid.

To screen for problems most Gps only test TSH and possibly T4 however, this doesn't give the full picture. If you have thyroid symptoms or are already diagnosed with an underactive thyroid it is worth exploring further and looking at both T3 (the active thyroid hormone) and thyroid antibodies to find out whether your immune system is involved. You will most probably have to do this through private testing.

## C-reactive protein

C-reactive protein (CRP) is a general marker of inflammation.

Numerous studies, including meta- analyses looking at tens of thousands of people, show that elevated CRP is associated with depression and anxiety.

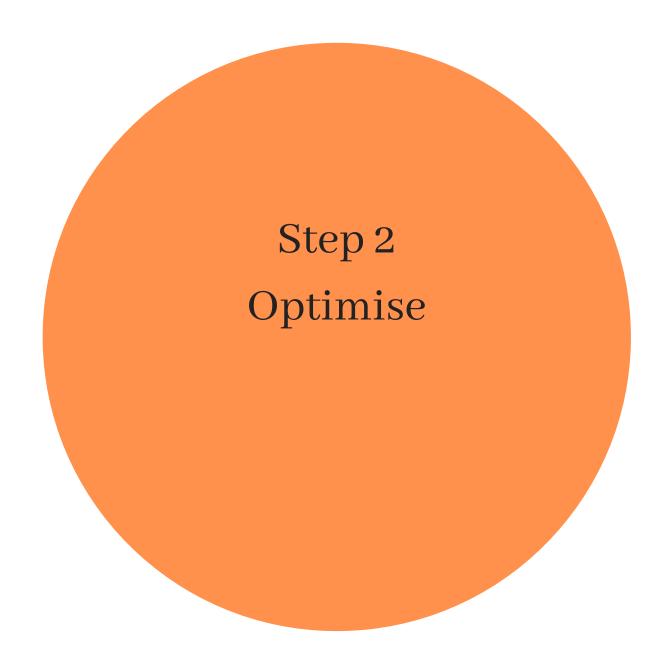
Dietary and lifestyle changes can all bring levels of inflammation down.

#### HBA1C

A measure of your blood sugar regulation. One of the first things to often consider in poor mental health and wellbeing.

High blood glucose levels contributes to high inflammation that may then affect your wellbeing.

Diet and lifestyle can make a huge difference to blood sugar control.



Eat right to optimise digestion, brain health, support your nervous system and emotional stability.

Research is clear that a healthy diet and lifestyle is fundamental to health, and this goes for mental health. The brain and nervous system are organs like any other in the human body and require the building blocks, nutrients to work properly.

Neurotransmitters, the chemicals in your brain responsible for your mood and emotions are produced from amino acids (proteins), a process which requires co-factors (vitamins and minerals).

Neurons, your nerve cells require fatty acids to fire properly and send messages around your body, I'm sure you get the idea! ☺

Eating the correct macronutrients (protein, carbohydrate and fat) in the correct ratio, also affects blood sugar balance which if unbalanced can cause low mood, irritability, anxiety, cravings and overeating. A chronic blood sugar imbalance can go on for years affecting mood, eating habits and emotions.

Emotional eating can also be a symptom of poor blood sugar control.

If you give your body what it needs, nourish it with healthy fats, good quality protein, complex carbohydrates, plenty of fibre, water, and of course chocolate and a little cake, (because we all need a treat every so often!), it gives it all the nutrients it needs to work properly and to balance out not only your biochemistry, but also regulate your moods, appetite, cravings and lots more.

Gut health and the health of your microbiota is also an emerging area shown to have an impact on your mental health. Your diet and lifestyle impacts the health of your intestine and microbiota (the trillions of organisms living in your gut) also shown to cause anxiety, stress, or depression.

If you've been trying for a long time to change your eating patterns or struggle with emotional eating be kind to yourself. Take it slowly and remember it's the simple things done consistently that will help you feel better!

Here's some recommendations to help you get started right now;

- Ensure you are eating sufficient protein. Include a good hand sized amount at each meal or around 20gs per meal. Amino acids, the building blocks of protein are needed to make up the chemicals in your brain that regulate your mood, thoughts and feelings.

Protein also helps to stabilise your blood sugar over the day preventing the peaks and troughs, and release of stress hormones, that can increase feelings of irritability, low mood, anxiety and depression, and drive cravings and overeating.

- Increase the colourful fruits and vegetables in your diet. Get a couple of portions in at every meal. Colourful fruits and vegetables also contain loads of vitamins and minerals, co-factors for the production of brain chemicals, and are essential for balanced emotions, the health of the brain and nervous system.

Increasing the variety of plant foods in your diet is also beneficial for the health of your gut microbiota. A diverse diet makes for a healthy happy microbiota!

- Eat 3 – 4 portions of oily fish per week.

Omega 3 fatty acids are not only essential for a healthy brain and nervous system but studies show they are beneficial in the treatment of both depression and anxiety, and can alleviate mood swings.

Aim to eat oily fish such as salmon, mackeral, sardines, tuna and anchovies 3 times per week. You may also benefit from taking an omega 3 fish oil.

- Don't skip meals – As mentioned above blood sugar balance is essential for stress, anxiety, mood and combating overeating.

Going for long periods of time without food when you experience symptoms such as increased irritability, shakiness, or the 'hangries', results in a release of stress hormones. Aim for 3 meals per day especially if you're feeling stressed or anxious.

There really is lots you can do to optimise your diet to improve your mental health.

If you have been struggling for a while you may feel like you have no will power, you just can't stop eating the 'wrong' foods or you may be experiencing intense cravings.

Many of these are not 'you', they are your biochemistry!

And you can overcome this!

The correct nutrition is very powerful and has the ability to transform your mood, your energy levels, remove brain fog and get you feeling like you again!

And all this without having to deprive yourself!



Nuture the lifestyle habits that will give you the best chance of success, instil a sense of wellbeing and happiness, and help you maintain the results for life.

The 3rd step is probably the most important step.

It doesn't matter how healthy your diet if you are otherwise feeling stressed or low and you are not putting in place the lifestyle strategies such as relaxation, self care, stress management and movement, even pleasure and joy, you will not get the full benefits.

These are very basic human needs that we have lost touch with, and even feel guilty for taking the time out to do them!

Step 3 is about looking after yourself in an holistic manner.

Aknowledging that health encompasses many aspects such as joy, connection, self care and relaxation.

Instilling the habits important for wellness is one of the most important things you can do but can actually be one of the hardest.

Sometimes when you are on that roller coaster of busy, busy, feeling stressed and overwhelmed, or you are feeling low, anxious or depressed it feels like the hardest thing to take action and do something different. But you have to do something different to get different results, and the smallest thing can be a catalyst to bigger change.

I help clients to work out what is best for them and how to start implementing these strategies into their lives.

The following are a couple of key areas for you to consider now;

- Stress and relaxation - Probably one of the most difficult but probably one of the most important. The body works from a top down affect with stress hormones and survival being the upmost priority, often to the detriment of other bodily processes. For example sex hormone synthesis and thyroid hormone production will all suffer if the body is prioritising the production of stress hormones.

Switch off your stress response and prioritise your cortisol, by performing regular activities that activate your parasympathetic nervous system (your rest and digest part of the nervous system).

This helps to lower the stress hormones and bring back homeostasis and balance back to your body.

You just need to make sure you do something everyday, even if only for a few minutes, and even if you don't think you are stressed!

The main thing is to choose something that works for you but some ideas include; deep breathing, meditation, yoga, reading, colouring, a relaxing bath, anything that quietens your mind and relaxes your body.

- Exercise & Movement - One of the most underutilised antidepressants, good for anxiety, stress, mood, confidence and self esteem. Incorporating regular appropriate activity into your lifestyle can improve your health and wellbeing in every way.

This is an important one to get right. You don't want to do too little or too much - you want to find the perfect amount for you.

It really does'nt matter what you do as long as you get your heart rate elevated and challenge your muscles occasionally. Exercise should leave you energised and invigorated, not totally exhausted.

### For now what i'd recommend is;

- To do something everyday that gets you slightly out of breath and slightly sweaty. This could be fast walking, swimming, dancing, hula hooping, or cycling.

#### - To walk more.

- If you are doing lots of cardio, mix it up with resistance training, and/or intensity training.
- Resistance training is important to maintain your muscles and bones.
  - Yoga and pilates are good for all round strength, balance, flexibility and reducing stress.

Be sure to check with your Gp if you have a chronic health condition or injury and are starting something new.

AND FINALLY.....

- Connection - Learning to reconnect with yourself and others.

This one can sometimes take a bit pf deep reflection and consideration but the following are a couple of aspects to consider;

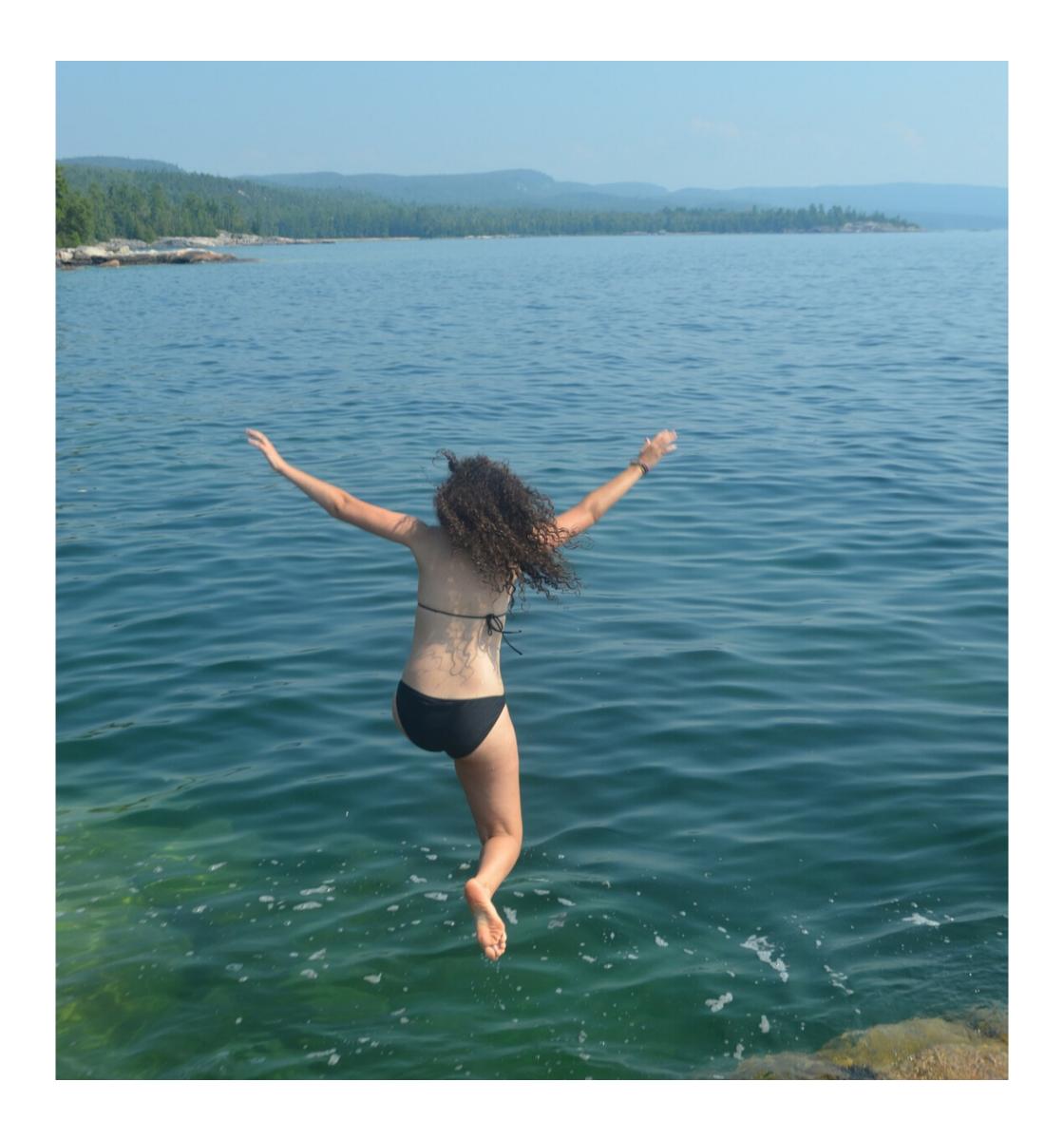
Learning to reconnect with yourself is one of the fundamentals of living a healthy, happy life. Have a think about what you love to do, what is your passion, what gives you joy and sets your heart on fire.

### Does your life reflect this?

Connection with others is also a basic human need. Finding like minded people to talk to, have meaningful conversations with, and share experiences with all make a positive impact on your health and wellbeing.

Is there anything you could do to bring more connection into your life?

## It's time to make the jump!



So what are you going to do now?

Are you going to make the jump and finally start taking your life back?

My 3 steps are achieveable for everyone. It just takes making a start with one simple thing.

I really hope you found this booklet useful and it helps you get your health and wellbeing to where you want it to be.

And if you need any additional support, encouragement, motivation or accountability to help put these steps into place,

with a bespoke plan tailored to you and your lifestyle,





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