NO ONE HAS FOUND THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH—YET—BUT THERE ARE CERTAINLY STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO FEND OFF DISEASE AND INCREASE YOUR LONGEVITY. HERE ARE 25 OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR LIVING LONGER.

BY RACHEL RABKIN PEACHMAN

THOUGH CRYONICS IS GENERALLY VIEWED WITH SKEPTICISM, IT HAS BECOME A “WHY-NOT?” FORM OF POTENTIAL LIFE EXTENSION, DRAWING INVESTORS SUCH AS PETER DIAMANDIS.
Look into concierge medicine

As a member of a personalized healthcare program, called concierge medicine, you receive high-quality, one-on-one preventive care. "All of our physicians have a reduced practice, which enables you to have an unhurried relationship with a doctor that’s based on an ongoing and comprehensive understanding of your health," says Bret Jorgensen, CEO of MDVIP, one example of a national network of physicians offering this service. For an $1,800 annual membership fee, you’ll receive unfettered access to your doctor, same-day appointments when needed and personal health coaching. "Your doctor knows who you are, your risk factors, your health goals—whether that's exercise, diet or heart attack risk management—and he helps you manage it," he says. mdvip.com

Sleep more

"If you sleep less than six hours per night, you're not going to live as long," says Dr. Steven Wilson, an MDVIP physician in Redlands, Calif. Most people need to go through at least five sleep cycles each night (which takes about 7.5 hours) to fully rest and repair body and mind. Research shows that going without this period of rejuvenation nightly increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease and other metabolic disorders. A diet of produce, lean protein, healthy fats and limited processed foods is best to keep your body functioning well for as long as possible.

Sequence your genome

Sequencing your genome gives you a complete picture of your inherited disease risk factors. With that information, you can outsmart your genes and make informed decisions about what to eat, which medications to take and how aggressively to treat certain diseases. Genes, which sequencizes your exome (part of your DNA) and provides a genetic counselor to help you interpret your data, is an example of a company in the field. Genes, 415.300.4477, genes.co

Eat in color and in moderation

Good nutrition is imperative to good health. "Everyone should eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day—of various colors, which represent different phytochemicals," says Wilson. It’s also important to stick to a moderate calorie intake. Excess weight is linked to an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease and other metabolic disorders. A diet of produce, lean protein, healthy fats and limited processed foods is best to keep your body functioning well for as long as possible.

Jump

Hip fractures are a leading trigger of death in older adults, says Dr. Michael Roizen, chief wellness officer at Cleveland Clinic and coauthor of AgeProof: Living Longer Without Running Out of Money or Breaking a Hip. "There is a simple way to guard against fractures: jumping. A trial published in the American Journal of Health Promotion found that women who jumped on a hard surface 40 times a day (20 jumps twice daily with 50 seconds of rest between each jump) increased bone density mass, while those who didn’t lost bone density mass. "Jumping it thought to create an electrical current that stimulates the bone and thickens internal bone mass," says Roizen. my.clevelandclinic.org

Practice speed-of-processing games

Researchers followed nearly 2,800 older adults for 10 years and compared those who did speed-of-processing brain games—which measure how quickly one can carry out simple cognitive tasks—with those who did memory or reasoning games. Those adults who focused on brain-processing speed were 33 percent less likely to develop dementia and had a nearly 50 percent reduction in auto accidents. You can find examples of these games on brainhq.com.

Try caloric fasting

Recent studies by researchers at University of Southern California’s Longevity Institute have found a link between controlled caloric restriction and a fortified immune system that combats cellular injury from aging diseases and cancer. The product of this research is the “fast-mimicking diet” (FMD), a five-day “fast” whereby one consumes 700 calories a day in the form of 50 percent fat, 35 percent carbs and 15 percent protein. Proponents say one only needs to do this fast three or four times a year to reap its benefits. ProLon, a prepackaged food plan, helps make the fast more manageable. Check with your doctor before adopting any fasting program. ProLon, 323.580.6855, prolongmd.com
EXERCISE SMARTLY

1. **Maintaining muscle strength as you age is imperative to long-term health and longevity,** says Rachel Straub, coauthor of Weight Training Without Injury. “Higher levels of muscle strength reduce the risk of falls, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and all-cause mortality.” To offset the decline of muscle and bone mass that starts around age 35, experts recommend at least 150 minutes per week of moderate cardiovascular activity in addition to regular weight training and stretching. Ask your doctor or trainer about the best exercise plan for you.

INTERVAL TRAINING CONSISTS OF SHORT BURSTS OF INTENSE EXERCISE WITH REST PERIODS, RATHER THAN ONE CONTINUOUS DURATION OF ENERGY.

CONSIDER CRYONICS

1. Do you believe in life after death? That’s the premise behind cryonics—the practice of freezing the body or brain immediately after death with the goal of revival in the future when there is a cure for whatever ailed you. While no person has been revived yet, there are two places in the U.S.—Alcor Life Extension Foundation in Arizona and the Cryonics Institute in Michigan—where people are cryogenically preserved. “It’s purely a science experiment, but it gives a person the possibility of life after death versus being buried or cremated after death with no possibility of revival,” says Marji Klima, an Alcor representative. It sounds like the stuff of sci-fi fantasies but serious minds are behind cryonics, including investor Peter Diamandis. Enthusiasts are banking on better medical technology tomorrow that will restore their bodies and minds for a second act. Fees for cryopreservation vary depending on the company and the service, ranging from $28,000 to $200,000 with a yearly membership fee between $210 and $705 that is paid through a trust set up while you are still alive. Alcor Life Extension Foundation, 495.505.1906, alcor.org; Cryonics Institute, 866.866.0695, cryonics.org

REDUCE SUGAR CONSUMPTION

1. Studies have found that cutting sugar—even while keeping overall calories the same—can lower circulating triglycerides, LDL (bad) cholesterol, hypertension and high blood glucose, all of which are risk factors for metabolic disorders such as heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends no more than six teaspoons (100 calories) of sugar a day for women, and no more than nine teaspoons (150 calories) daily for men.

DON’T FORGET THE FISH

1. There continues to be mounting clinical evidence for the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids—they reduce inflammation, rejuvenate skin, improve blood lipid profiles, guard against heart disease and decrease the risk of brain and joint injuries. Though the jury’s out on how effective supplements are versus getting them straight from the source, a 2016 study from the Mayo Clinic solidifies their importance to overall longevity and cardiovascular health in any form. The two types of omega-3 fatty acids you should consume, says Roizen, are DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and ALA (alpha-linolenic acid). DHA is found in fish such as wild salmon and mackerel, and ALA is found in plant-based foods like flaxseed and walnuts.

CORD BLOOD THAT IS INTENDED FOR PERSONAL USE OR IMMEDIATE FAMILY DOES NOT REQUIRE FDA APPROVAL BEFORE ITS USE.

STORE YOUR BABY’S UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD

1. If you or your partner is going to give birth, consider storing the umbilical cord blood. It is a rich source of stem cells, which can be used to regenerate healthy blood and immune systems to treat diseases. Cord blood could help not only your child, but also family members with similar DNA. The material is being used to save lives now, and it’s being studied in potential treatments for immune disorders, cancer, diabetes and other incurable illnesses. The cost is relatively moderate: Cord Blood Registry, for example, charges about $1,700 for the collection and an annual $125 storage fee. Cord Blood Registry, 888.578.4930, cordblood.com

MEDITATE

1. Stress causes the body to go into flight- or-flight mode, which raises cortisol levels, increases blood pressure and can cause chronic inflammation that increases the risk for all manner of diseases, says MDVIP physician Wilson. There are many ways to dial down your stress level, but the ancient act of meditation has been shown to reduce stress in a way that actually changes your brain. A 2011 Harvard study found that participants who meditated experienced a thickening of the cerebral cortex in areas linked to attention and emotional integration. And a 2015 study from UCLA demonstrated that the brains of longtime practitioners of meditation had more gray matter volume, which aids in cognition and memory.

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**SPICE UP YOUR KITCHEN**

“Spices like turmeric, ginger and cayenne pepper have anti-inflammatory properties and strengthen the immune system,” says Dr. Taz Bhatia, integrative health expert and author of What Doctors Eat. A trial published in the Journal of Molecular Nutrition & Food Research, for example, found that turmeric can be just as effective as ibuprofen in treating osteoarthritis of the knee. Other studies indicate that turmeric has the potential to inhibit the growth of cancerous tumor cells and prevent atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries).

**SUPPLEMENT SPARINGLY**

Deficiencies in certain nutrients can raise your likelihood of illness. Though it’s best to get minerals and nutrients through food, it may be necessary to fill some nutritional holes with supplements. “Take B12/86/9 vitamins to reduce blood homocysteine levels, thereby decreasing the risk for dementia and stroke,” says Dr. Demetrios Maragkopoulos, medical director of the NorthShore University HealthSystem Neurological Institute. He also recommends vitamin D to improve cognitive function (and build bone mass) and a daily multivitamin. Check with your physician about dosage, brand and possible side effects and drug interactions, NorthShore Neurological Institute, 877.570.7200, northshore.org

**LEARN YOUR FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY**

“If you don’t choose DNA sequencing, you still have to learn about your inherited risk of disease—and how to offset it—by talking with family members. For instance, if you know that a relative carries a mutation of the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, which increases the risk for breast, ovarian and prostate cancer, ask your doctor about testing for that mutation. “Getting a genetic test once can help guide prostate cancer screening throughout the entirety of a man’s adult life,” says Dr. Jianfeng Xu, director of the Program for Personalized Cancer Care at NorthShore University HealthSystem in Chicago. “Men who have any pathogenic mutation should consider prostate cancer screening earlier and more frequently.”

**ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT COQ10**

The antioxidant coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is necessary for cell function, and levels decrease with age. Because a growing number of studies show that CoQ10 can benefit people with cardiovascular disorders, many experts suggest supplementing with the antioxidant (see Dan Carlin’s “Power Couple” on page 174). Dr. Sara Gottfried, author of Younger: A Breakthrough Program to Reset Your Genes, Reverse Aging, and Turn Back the Clock 10 Years, recommends 100 to 200 mg of CoQ10 per day. (Note: CoQ10 may make warfarin, a blood thinner, less effective.)

**COMPANIES LIKE AMERICAN GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES ARE FOCUSED ON ERADICATING ITS GENETIC ROOTS AND REMOVE MOST OF THE MAJOR DISEASES THAT KILL YOU NOW,” SAYS JEFF GALVIN, THE COMPANY’S CEO. FOR ABOUT $3,500, THE COMPANY SEQUENCES YOUR ENTIRE GENOME AND ANALYZES YOUR SALIVA, BLOOD AND LIFESTYLE TO IDENTIFY DISEASE RISKS.**

**TRACK EFFORTS TO ROOT OUT DISEASES**

Companies like American Genetic Technologies are focused on eradicating specific illnesses. “We are using gene-editing technology to treat disease at its genetic roots and remove most of the major diseases that kill you now,” says Jeff Galvin, the company’s CEO. For about $3,500, the company sequences your entire genome and analyzes your saliva, blood and lifestyle to identify disease risks. **“It’s also the first public offering of any of the gene-editing technologies are focused on eradicating its genetic roots and remove most of the major diseases that kill you now,” says Galvin.**

**BE PROACTIVE ABOUT SCREENING**

“If you don’t have a concierge doctor who closely monitors your health, theonus of getting the right screening tests falls on you. “Stay up to date with screenings; without them you’re putting yourself at risk,” says Franco Vladic, a gastroenterologist at the Center for Digestive Health in Willoughby, Ohio. These tests are some of the best tools available to identify early disease and nip it in the bud. “For instance, colon cancer is the third-leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., but it’s a preventable disease if caught in time,” Vladic says. For those with a family history of colon cancer, Vladic suggests a colonoscopy, which is recommended for people 50 and older. Vladic suggests the Cologuard test, which involves no bowel preparation or dietary restrictions. It is an at-home test that looks for blood and DNA in stool, and flags cancerous and precancerous cells for further testing. Talk with your doctor about how regularly you should receive screenings such as mammograms, skin cancer checks and readings of cholesterol, triglycerides, blood glucose and other health indicators. Cologuard, 844.870.8870, cologuardtest.com

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