CourseMints

GUIDE

Biohacking Starter Guide

Supplements, Routines, and Lifestyle Hacks

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DISCLAIMER

This guide is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice. It does not diagnose, treat or replace care from a qualified health professional. Talk to your doctor before you change any treatment, medication or care plan, and get help promptly for any symptom that worries you.

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How to Use This Guide

Biohacking has a reputation problem. Search the word and you find ice baths at dawn, a dozen capsules with breakfast, glowing red light panels, monthly blood panels and people who plan to live to 150. Some of that is harmless fun, some of it is expensive, and a little of it is dangerous. Underneath the noise sits a genuinely useful idea: treat your body as something you can learn about, change one thing at a time, measure what happens, and keep what works for you.

This guide teaches that idea without the hype. It starts with the foundations that carry the most weight for energy, focus and long-term health, then moves to the tools people associate with biohacking: cold and heat, caffeine strategy, breathing, wearables and supplements. Every claim is graded, so you know which hacks rest on solid research and which rest on a podcast. Then you learn to run small, fair experiments on yourself, so your decisions come from your own data rather than from someone else's marketing.

The biohacking pyramid

Picture your options as a pyramid. The wide base does most of the work; the narrow top adds a little, at most.

Level	What it includes	How much it can do
Base	Sleep, light, movement, food, not smoking, little or no alcohol	Most of what is in your control
Middle	Routines, caffeine timing, stress tools, cold and heat, measurement	Useful refinements once the base is steady
Top	Supplements	Small, specific effects for specific people; often nothing

People who say biohacking "didn't work" for them usually built from the top down: they bought supplements and gadgets while sleeping six hours a night and sitting all day. This guide builds from the bottom up.

How evidence is graded in this guide

Label	What it means
Strong	Consistent results from good human trials, and part of mainstream medical or public health advice
Moderate	Some decent human trials or consistent findings, with real gaps. Reasonable to try
Weak	Small, short or early studies, animal or lab findings, or results that vary a lot between people. Fine to try if it is safe, but do not expect much
Not supported	Marketing or folklore without good human evidence, or with evidence against it

These labels are our honest summary of the research at the time of writing, not a formal grading system. Research moves, and where experts disagree, the guide says so.

How each chapter works

Each chapter follows the same pattern: why it matters in plain language, numbered steps, common mistakes, a short example, an exercise with space to write, and key takeaways. The people in the examples are fictional composites written to show the method; they are not real customers or testimonials.

⚠ CAUTION

Before you begin

This guide is educational and does not replace your doctor. Talk to a doctor before changing your exercise, diet or supplements if you have a heart, kidney or liver condition, diabetes, high or low blood pressure, an eating disorder now or in the past, or any ongoing illness; if you take prescription medicines; or if you are pregnant, trying to conceive or breastfeeding. Ask a pharmacist before adding any supplement to a medicine. Never stop or change a prescribed medicine to try a hack. This guide is written for adults.

CHAPTER 1

What Biohacking Is, and What It Is Not

01

"Biohacking" covers everything from home biology labs and implanted chips to someone who tracks their sleep and drinks green tea. In this guide it means one thing: deliberately changing your habits, environment or intake to improve how you feel and function, and checking the result honestly.

The useful core

At its best, biohacking borrows three habits from science:

1. **Start from what is already known.** Large studies of thousands of people are a better starting point than one person's story, including your own hunch.
2. **Measure.** Decide what "better" means before you start, in numbers you can record.
3. **Change one variable at a time.** Otherwise you cannot tell what caused the result.

Everything else (the gadgets, the cold water, the capsules) is optional.

Why the hype is so loud

Several forces push attention toward the extreme end:

- **Money.** Supplements, devices and test kits are products. Walking and a regular bedtime are free, so nobody advertises them.
- **Mechanism stories.** A plausible pathway ("this compound raises a molecule linked to aging") feels like proof. It is not. Bodies are complicated, and raising a marker often changes nothing that matters.
- **Self-selection.** You hear from the people for whom something seemed to work, usually people who changed many things at once.

THE SCIENCE

Why animal results so often fail in people

Many compounds lengthen the lives of yeast, worms or mice. Lab animals live short, controlled lives, often on doses no person would take, and they do not share our genes, diets or diseases. A large share of treatments that look promising in animal studies fail, or are never tested, in human trials. Treat “extends lifespan in mice” as “worth studying,” not “worth buying.”

How to read a health claim in 60 seconds

1. **Who was studied?** Cells, animals or people? How many people, and were they like you in age, sex and health?
2. **What was measured?** A real outcome (fewer heart attacks, better sleep, more strength) or a marker in the blood? Moving a marker is not the same as improving health.
3. **Compared with what?** Was there a control group or a placebo, and were people randomly assigned?
4. **How big was the effect?** “Cuts risk by 50%” can mean 2 in 1,000 people becoming 1 in 1,000. Look for absolute numbers.
5. **Who profits, and has it been repeated?** Industry funding and sellers’ enthusiasm are reasons to look for independent confirmation. One study is a lead, not a conclusion.

Three questions before any hack

1. **Is it safe for me,** with my health, my medicines and my life stage?
2. **Is there decent evidence in humans** for the outcome I care about?
3. **Is it worth the money, time and attention** compared with a foundation I am neglecting?

Common mistakes

- **Starting at the top of the pyramid.** Supplements cannot outrun short sleep and a sedentary day.
- **Stacking.** Five changes in one week make a pleasant story and a useless experiment.

- **Mistaking a sensation for a benefit.** The buzz after cold water or the tingle from a pre-workout powder tells you something happened, not that something improved.
- **Copying someone else's protocol.** A 25-year-old athlete's routine may not fit a 50-year-old with two children and a desk job.
- **Hacking a symptom that needs a doctor.** Persistent fatigue can come from anemia, thyroid disease, sleep apnea, diabetes or depression. Rule those out first.

EXAMPLE

Tom's audit

Tom, 38, spends about $180 a month on supplements: a multivitamin, a "focus" blend, a greens powder, an NAD+ booster, ashwagandha, magnesium and fish oil. He also sleeps about six hours, drinks three energy drinks a day and rarely exercises. Graded with this guide, none of them targets his real problem: short sleep and a 4 pm energy drink. None was prescribed, so he pauses them all and spends the savings on blackout blinds and walking shoes. After four weeks of a fixed wake time, morning walks and an afternoon caffeine cutoff, his average energy rating moves from 4 to 6 out of 10. Later he reintroduces one supplement, creatine, when he starts strength training.

EXERCISE

My current hacks audit

List everything you currently do, take or own in the name of health or performance, with its monthly cost.

1. Which of these address the base of the pyramid, and which sit at the top?

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PLANNER

Biohacking Starter Planner

Morning Routine Builder, 30-Day Experiment Tracker and Supplement Discussion Sheet

COMPANION TO BIOHACKING STARTER GUIDE

INSIDE THIS PLANNER

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PART 1

1 Baseline and Morning Routine

Baseline Snapshot

Start date: _____ **Day 90 review date:** _____

Choose three to five measures (at least one about how you feel and one objective) and leave the rest blank. Fill in the averages and ranges on day 14.

Measure	When I record it	Baseline average	Range (low to high)	Day 90
Energy 1 to 10				
Focus 1 to 10				
Mood 1 to 10				
Sleep hours				
Sleep quality 1 to 5				
Steps per day				
Resting heart rate				
Blood pressure				
Waist (level with navel)				
30-second chair stands				