



1007: My Non-Negotiables and Weird Habits
For Feeling My Best (Solo)

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast!

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And this episode is brought to you by Apollo Neuro. This is a tool that has really helped me feel more relaxed and de-stress. It's an Apollo wearable that can be worn anywhere on your body, and it tracks sleep like other wearables. But unlike other wearables, it actually improves my sleep automatically.

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as well. It's especially great for moms because it has no side effects and it's safe if you're pregnant or nursing.

You can learn more about Apollo and get your own by going to apolloneuro.com/wellnessmama. So find out more and get your own by going to apolloneuro.com/wellnessmama and use the code WELLNESSMAMA all caps and one word, for a discount.

Katie: Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And this brief solo episode is going to touch on some of my personal daily non-negotiables and weird habits for feeling my best in case these can serve as inspiration to be helpful for you as well. I'd be curious how many of these you already do. As well as other quirky habits that you might have that I could learn from. So I would love to hear your feedback in the comments or on Instagram, or especially in a rating or review. If you are willing to take two minutes and leave an honest one, I would be deeply, deeply grateful. In this episode, you're probably gonna, if you've listened before, here we talk about some things you would expect like minerals, hydration, light.

But I'm also gonna mention some weirder tools that I don't talk about as much, and how to build your own list of non-negotiables to feel your best. Also, I've said before, I don't do anything every single day, including eat. I do, however, try to sleep every single day. But there have been days where I haven't done that either. But outside of the very, like, truly basics like hydration, light, and sleep, I don't take any supplements every single day. I don't eat any certain foods any single day or every single day. However, these are habits that I do extremely consistently, if not every single day. So people often assume, or seem to infer, that my non-negotiables might involve elaborate biohacks, expensive supplements, fancy equipment.

But actually most of the things on this list, as you will hear, are extremely simple. And either free or very inexpensive with a few weird ones mixed in. The longer I've been in the health and wellness world, the more I've come around to actually these kind of core, foundational, human supporting things that are not expensive or complicated, or don't take a lot of time. They simply involve actually returning to a state, I feel like, of being more human, of being in nature more. I have said before, I think many of the problems we encounter in a modern world are really from a type of nature deficit disorder in that we are meant to be much more in harmony with nature than a lot of us get to be.

We're meant to spend time in the natural light. We are meant to have darkness at night. We are meant to be hydrated with water that has minerals in it and is technically living. We are meant to have our bare feet on the ground. To get fresh air. And all of those things are, for

the most part, in most places, available to some degree by going outside. So you're gonna hear me talk a lot about going outside. But as a preview, I'm gonna touch on some topics you would expect like minerals, light, and sleep, as well as ones I don't talk about as much like mouth taping, grounding, and some other strange, odd habits. So start with the ones you might already be tired of me talking about.

Let's talk about minerals. And this is an area of interest for me the past two years. I actually am coming more and more to believe that this is a vital piece that a lot of people don't have fully optimized and that it can be such a game changer. It absolutely has been for me. I consume a lot of different minerals from a lot of different sources. For some reasons I will explain more of actually coming relatively soon. But more minerals the better for me right now. And this is not just about drinking more water. I think this is a little bit of a misconception when it comes to hydration. It's also about minerals and electrolytes. I'm gonna do a series soon on how our body is electric. And in this sense, it's not, water alone is not hydrating.

We need electrolytes and minerals for our proper electrical communication and cellular communication to happen. So I consume a wide variety of minerals throughout the day, but I start in the morning with either mineral water with BEAM minerals or Eidon minerals or salt water or electrolytes in water. And I drink this outside in the sun, which I'll also talk about, ideally barefoot. But a quirky detail here, I travel with minerals. I do almost nothing every day, but minerals go with me everywhere. I also travel with my own salt. 90% of Americans are low in magnesium. I've had podcast guests say that close to that percentage might actually be low in sodium because of the low salt messaging we got for so long.

And many of us to varying degrees are low in other smaller trace minerals as well. These are things that used to be present in much larger amounts in food and in our water supply and now we have to be a little bit more intentional about getting. And especially if we live in a hot climate, exercise or sauna, we deplete minerals much more quickly. I've mentioned this stat before, but the person who does any of those things can lose as many minerals in five years as an average person might in an entire lifetime. I do all of those things. So I'm very intentional about minerals and get almost all of those forms of minerals every day throughout the day in some form.

I'm also a fan of front loading and hydration and structuring it. So we wake up mildly dehydrated from the water we lose in simply our breath at night. So I try to rehydrate before food and wat... before food or activity in the morning. I also find front loading hydration is easier, so I'm not chugging water at night and up to go to the bathroom, or I'm not having to chase it later. You can also get structured water from fruits and veggies, but I like having, I have actually a water structurer on my house from Natural Action, which I can link to, as

well as a small portable one that I can travel with and pour water through. So I often add minerals and structured water.

I also love coconut water and homemade mineral water instead of plain water. I also did a podcast about this recently, but adding a pinch, tiny pinch, of baking soda to water first thing in the morning seems to be very beneficial as well. I know you've heard me talk about light before. I'm gonna do it again. This is my daily reset and non-negotiable. I think it is actually one of the most overlooked factors of health. I love that it's getting talked about more. One of my non-negotiables is to get morning sunlight within an hour of waking without glasses or sunglasses. Not through a window, but my bare eyes outside. Don't have to look at the sun, but be outside exposed to the light of the sun.

As soon as possible after waking up. This is beneficial for circadian rhythm, for melatonin production later in the day for stabilizing our hormones for proper cortisol rhythms for so much more. So again, that's my habit stacking of mineral water, barefoot outside in natural light. Even on a cloudy day, we are getting much more broad spectrum light outdoors than we are getting indoors. And this has compounding benefits across the board for health. So quirky detail here, like I said I aim for sun on my skin and my eyes whenever safe and possible. Especially in the morning. Anytime I can see sunrise and sunset. That is beautiful natural red light that is freely available in nature. It is great for our skin, great for our eyes.

Again, I'm never staring directly at the sun, but making sure I am outside and not through a window or through sunglasses or glasses and morning light exposure is actually linked to better BMI and sleep. That was in a study in sleep health in 2014 found that all other variables being equal without any dietary or other changes. People who got consistent morning light exposure had a lower BMI without changing their diet and lifestyle other than the light. So again, this one is free. If you live in a place that is not a bunker and can go outside for 10 to 15 minutes, that's all it takes in the morning.

This one free habit might make a huge difference for you. I feel like the flip side to that is obviously sleep is very important. I believe quality sleep starts in the morning with that light exposure, with proper hydration, with safety signaling cues approaching in the morning, which I've also talked about. But the flip side of course is quality sleep. In almost a thousand episodes of this podcast I am yet to have anyone say sleep is not important or does not matter. In fact, I would say sleep is absolutely non-negotiable. Without optimal sleep, we cannot be optimal in every area of health. And sleep is a superpower. I can link to some resources around us.

If sleep is a struggle for you, it has been for me at various times of my life and I have had many guests on here who have tremendous resources for helping with specifics of

whatever that might be, including Mollie Eastman of Sleep as a Skill and some others. This is one I fiercely prioritize many of the things I talk about in this podcast are free, like going outside like light minerals are typically very inexpensive. Sleep is one I prioritize in my budget because we sleep on average, hopefully, a third of our life, and anything we can do that improves our sleep without effort has compounding positive effects to other areas of our life. Not to mention if it's something we can change in our environment or our sleep pattern, that is beneficial.

We only really have to make that change once and then get the passive benefit while we sleep. So some things that I have done that have been helpful for this are Chilipad. I have a Dock Pro on my bed. There's a lot of evidence showing that sleeping in a slightly cooler temperature is very beneficial for sleep, both duration and quality. And I have certainly found this to be true. So rather than cool my whole house to 68 degrees, I have a Dock Pro on my bed that I keep cool. And this lets me sleep at a regulated, cool temperature similar to if I slept on the ground outside.

So again, mimicking nature, and I find this has a huge impact on my sleep, and I miss it desperately when I travel.

So I have full blackout curtains from Ushades that come all the way down and remove all light in my room. I have a Chilipad Dock Pro on my bed, and then I try not to keep my phone in my room, and if I do I keep it on airplane mode. Another sleep related thing I have not talked about as much is mouth taping. This is a quirky one. Not necessarily gonna be comfortable or beneficial for everybody. It looks weird, but it can be very supportive of sleep. And I try to do this pretty often. I'll link to some mouth tape that is non-toxic in the show notes. I've also just used a tiniest bit of athletic tape across the middle of my lips before, and that seems to work for me.

But there's a lot of evidence that mouth breathing is not ideal for sleep. It's also not ideal for our teeth as it can increase the risk of cavities, which dentists talk about. We want slower, ideally, slower, longer, breaths in and out through the nose. As you would expect, mouth taping can help facilitate this by removing our ability to breathe in and out from our mouth. However, and Mollie Eastman has whole podcasts on this. It is important to note that if someone has sleep apnea or some kind of sleep disorder, mouth taping may not be a good idea, and you would want to figure that out and address that before you're taping your mouth shut at night. Again, sleep I think, is one of the most important things we can do.

There's a statistic that if we sleep less than six hours a night, we have a 12% risk of higher death with all other factors being accounted for. I believe that was in the European Heart

Journal. And there's evidence about the importance of sleep across the board. Animals naturally sleep more and eat less when they're injured or recovering. And kind of upward to about even the nine hour mark, the benefits of sleep increased with duration and quality. And the problems with lack of sleep increase the less sleep we get. Okay, so the weird but effective list of either free or inexpensive daily habits. I mentioned mouth taping, which can help with better oxygenation and deeper sleep. Also, I mentioned grounding, which I love doing.

Ideally also at sunrise at sunset to get the extra benefits while hydrating, but grounding alone can feel calming, can reduce inflammation. There's studies that show that standing on the ground barefoot actually could help get our cortisol into better rhythms and improve HRV over time. This one is not necessarily free, but when possible, I love doing sauna and cold plunge, either separately or together, which is called contrast therapy. Because these are hormetic stressors, meaning they create short-term stress on the body that lead to better stress mitigation over time. And I mentioned before the Finish sauna study that was re-reported in JAMA in 2015 that showed over a 40% lower all cause mortality with regular sauna use, which I believe was defined as four or more times per week.

And the minimum effective time dose, I believe, was 19 minutes per session. So if Sauna is available to you. This is another one I say if it was a pill, everybody would take it. Unfortunately not everybody has access to it, but sauna can be incredibly beneficial. And if I could only keep sort of one wellness modality in my house, it would be without question sauna. I've also talked before about safety signals and how thinking this way can reframe our understanding of health in a lot of ways. And one of the things here that seemingly, especially for women, for most women, can feel very helpful and that I try to make a regular habit, is protein first mornings, after the hydration with minerals in the natural light.

I also try to get at least 40 grams of protein as soon as possible after waking and find this really helps with stable energy and satiety. And from a hormone perspective, seems to send the signal that food is abundant. We are not starving. Things are going well. And I find that I have much more stable energy. I also try to stop eating at sunset whenever possible. When I've talked about that before, it was surprisingly controversial. I understand that won't work for everybody. I understand that in some places in the world, the sun does not set at times of the year or sets at 1:00 PM at other times of the year. Obviously there are exceptions. I live in an area with relatively normal sunrise and sunset patterns and find I sleep better if I stop eating before dark.

Another one, free for the most part, that is not as talked about, I think very valuable is hanging by our hands daily. This stretches our shoulders, it decompresses our spine. I've had physical therapists say that it's one of the most supportive things we can do of our

shoulders and that many should problems actually will resolve with regular hanging. But even more importantly, it supports grip strength, which I've done a whole podcast explaining the benefits of and how this correlates to longevity. I think it's something worth nurturing and there's a lot of benefits to hanging for just ideally three minutes per day, even if it's spread out into 10 or 15 second chunks.

A cumulative time of three minutes per day can have awesome benefits for your spine, for your grip strength, and then by extension longevity as well. I also sometimes add in red light therapy. But a caveat here, I will link to some red light therapy in the show notes. I love that these devices are available and I know they can be pricey, and that red light is naturally and freely available at sunrise and sunset every single day. Dr. Courtney Hunt talks about this a lot. I love her light webinars and her research around this and recommend checking her out. But you can get free red light every single day during sunrise and sunset. So one way or another, I think that's an awesome way to get that really restorative type of light that we know is supportive for mitochondria and skin health.

And we don't have to spend thousands of dollars on red light panels to do it. We just have to prioritize sunrise and sunset. Less conventional, and this is not something that everyone will have access to however. I have recently opened a wellness center where I live locally that has a wide range of PEMF options and a biocharger.

I do notice faster recovery and energy from these. I don't feel like these in any way have to be non-negotiable. Like I said, I would keep sauna if I could only pick one thing. However, because I have access to these, these are things I love to add in and I do feel a difference from. But I think it also goes back to the habit stacking of the free simple things. My kids don't think anything of me barefoot in the yard in the morning drinking salty water in the morning sun. And in fact, some of them do this as well. Or I will see them out walking at sunrise and I love to see that.

So as we get close to the end of our time, I just wanted to highlight some of the statistics and data. Which are, when it comes to the importance of minerals, 90 plus percent of Americans are low in magnesium as well as many of us are low in salt and potassium, as well as trace minerals.

Even a 1 to 2% dehydration decreases focus and energy. That study came out of the Journal of American College of Nutrition. Morning Light exposure is correlated to better BMI, better sleep, better mood, that was reported in Sleep Health in 2014. If we get less than six hours of sleep, we have a 12% higher risk of early death. That was from the European Heart Journal. The Finnish sauna study reported again in the JAMA and Internal Medicine in 2015, showed that sauna four to seven times a week resulted in a 40% lower risk all cause

mortality, which is statistically very significant and almost absurd in its significance. And there's even a study showing that grounding reduced inflammation markers and improved sleep. That was actually in the Journal of Inflammation Research in 2015. So wrap up summary, key takeaways. Non-negotiables do not need to be complicated. As you heard, most of mine are pretty simple. Most of them are free. I think the sauna is awesome when you can add it in. Totally fine if you can't.

I think the quirky biohacking tools are so much fun and awesome and you can be completely healthy without them. And I think it's the small, consistent inputs that change everything for the long term. If you have time, I would encourage you to add in one of these normal and one of these weird, quirky habits to try this week and to remember that consistency creates the compound effect.

I've heard compounding called the eighth Wonder of the World, and I think this applies very much in health, just like it does in money. The weird little habits you do daily can make you feel extraordinary long term. And I would love to hear what yours are. What are your non-negotiables? What can you not, not do every day?

What are you unwilling to not do every day? I'd love to hear about it in the comments or on Instagram. I would also love, as always to hear from you who I should talk to next, what topics you would like me to cover, what questions you have, and your honest feedback. It's always welcome. If you could take just a minute to leave an honest rating or review on Apple, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts, I would be extremely grateful as that helps other people find and listen as well and helps keep Wellness Mama going.

For today, thank you so much for spending your time with me, for sharing your energy and attention with me today. I don't take that lightly. I am so grateful and I hope you will join me again on the next episode of the Wellness Mama Podcast.