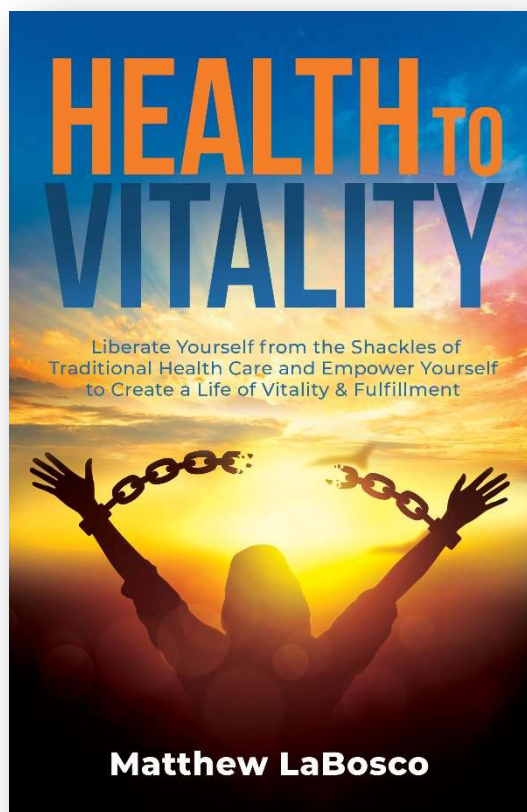


CREATING SYSTEMIC VITALITY

AIR & WATER QUALITY





TWO SIMPLE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT

#1: Plants

#2: Air Purifiers

AIR POLLUTION

When we hear the words ‘air pollution’, we tend to think of the air quality outdoors. We think of our city’s skyline immersed in a blanket of smog, that semi-truck in front of us on the freeway puffing out billowing clouds of black smoke that we inhale as we zip around the city, or the smell in the air when we pull up to the airport that seems to be a cocktail of all sorts of gasses, exhausts, and air pollutants all confined to one area.



However I’ve come to discover that not all air pollutants are strictly found outside, and don’t come solely from cars, planes, power plants, and the other sources we hear about. Neither is it only confined to congested cities. It happens to be right inside our homes and work places as well. This air pollution I’m speaking of is from the materials found in and around our own homes. This pollution is also referred to as “Sick Building Syndrome”. According to NASA, the two biggest problems with indoor air pollution are “the identification of the trace chemicals and their correlation with disease-like symptoms.”

Consider how many hours a day we spend indoors, at home, work, school, in the malls, and movie theaters. For the majority of us it’s probably more than the time we spend outside! Maybe we can’t control what we breathe everywhere we go, but the good news is we can certainly have a hand in what we breathe at home!

So what can help us clean up the air pollution in our homes? Plants of course! It makes perfect sense.

We have been in relationship with plants since the beginning of time.

Without them human life would not be possible at all.

You may be asking yourself, “How do houseplants clean the air?” Plants absorb particulates from the air at the same time that they take in carbon dioxide, which is then turned into oxygen through what most of us learned in grade school as “photosynthesis”. In addition, microorganisms associated with the plants are present in the potting soil, and these microbes are also helpful in cleaning the air we breathe.



In a joint effort with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), NASA did a two-year study that collected data on the potential use of houseplants as a tool to solve the problem of indoor air pollution. After reading NASA's Final Report< {INTERIOR LANDSCAPE PLANTS FOR INDOOR AIR POLLUTION ABATEMENT FINAL REPORT}—(SEPTEMBER 15, 1989B.C. Wolverton, Ph.D. Principal Investigator NASA)> it is evident that there are potentially three major chemicals lurking in our homes and workplaces - benzene, formaldehyde, and trichloroethylene.

As per NASA's report, these toxins can be found in...are you ready? Just to name a few, gasoline, rubber, carpets, adhesives, particle board, paints, air fresheners, detergents, inks, oils, pharmaceuticals, dyes, lacquers, varnishes, consumer paper products (including grocery bags, waxed papers, facial tissues, and paper towels), wrinkle resisters, water repellants, binders in floor coverings, copy machines and printers. It's pretty much safe to say we can find a majority of these items in our homes and work places.

So maybe now you are wondering what the side effects are from breathing in these chemicals. In NASA's final report, they linked these chemicals to a number of symptoms, some of them minor, and some not so minor. Here are a few - dizziness, weakness, euphoria, asthma, headaches, nausea, blurred vision, respiratory diseases, tremors, irregular heartbeat, liver and kidney damage, paralysis, loss of appetite, drowsiness, nervousness, psychological disturbances, diseases of the blood system, (including anemia and bone marrow disease), leukemia in humans, inflammation of the skin, blistering, and dermatitis. Many of us probably just pass these symptoms off as "allergies", "stress", "genetics", or "I'm just not feeling so great today." Maintaining awareness around these symptoms could prove beneficial to ensure you're keeping your vitality intact.

PLANTS

Now that you have been faced with the reality of what all of us, our families, and our furry friends might be inhaling, the good news is we have a choice to do something about it!

Not only do plants brighten up and bring life to our home, they help clean the air in our environment. After all, why do we want to shut ourselves indoors away from the ecological system that keeps us alive?

There are so many different types of houseplants you can get as creative as you want decorating your home with them. Or if you would rather just stick one in a corner and water it every so often, there are plants that are good for that, too. There is such a variety that you can find one no matter what your style is – minimalist, modern, homey, etc. From a mansion to a tiny apartment, there is a plant for everyone, the green thumbs, and the not so green thumbs.



In no particular order here are the top ten house plants for purifying the air.



Peace Lily - They are known to be super easy to care for, and are considered a hardy and forgiving plant. As soon as you see their famous noticeable droop, just give them some water and they will perk right back up. They are susceptible to root rot though, so be careful not to over water. They are great at breaking down particles and neutralizing the air. They can also help reduce mold spores, and if they are placed in your bathroom they can help keep your curtains and tiles mildew free! However, if you have children, and or pets, make sure they are out of reach; this plant is toxic to them. Also be sure to wash your hands after handling, as they produce crystals that can irritate skin.



Garden Mum (Chrysanthemums) – These thrive best in a window with filtered light, and prefer temperatures between 60-70 degrees. Only water when the soil begins to feel dry. (www.gardenguides.com Damask's: *How to Keep Mums Alive Inside*)



Gerbera Daisies - are great for removing benzene, a known cancer-causing chemical. These would be great plants to place in your bedroom because they absorb carbon dioxide and give oxygen overnight which help improves sleep. (www.sustainablebabysteps.com)



Spider Plant - NASA places this plant in the top three for removing formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, and other toxins. (NASA 1989 Final Report) This plant is said to be the most adaptable of houseplants and the easiest to grow. It can grow and stay alive in all conditions! It is the perfect plant for first timers who are still lacking the green thumb (Nikki Phipps, Author of: *Bulb-o-licious Garden*)



Dracaena - Comes from the Ancient Greek word *Drakaina*, which means female dragon. It is an undemanding plant that tolerates low light and low humidity. Its ideal climate is between 65-75 degrees, and is forgiving to the occasional missed watering. If the leaves start browning, though, it does not mean it needs more water; it is actually the opposite, and it is getting too much water. Keep this plant away from your pets as it is toxic to them. Also, this plant can grow up to six feet tall, so if you are living in a crowded or small space, this may not be ideal for you. (Jackie Carrol: *How to Care for a Dracaena*) (www.liveandfeel.com)



Ficus/Weeping Fig - NASA's research found that this plant helps filter out pollutants from carpet and furniture. It helps with all three of the main chemicals we talked about, formaldehyde, benzene, and trichloroethylene. It does best in indirect or filtered light. They also prefer temperatures above 70 degrees which is great for those of us who live in SoCal. They do need to be fertilized once a month, though, which might be too high maintenance for some people (www.mnn.com)



Boston Fern – This is said to act as a natural air humidifier, and removes formaldehyde. It is one of the top air purifying house plants. It likes bright light and damp soil, but can be tolerant of drought and partial light. (www.sustainablebabysteps.com)



Snake Plant/Mother-in-law's Tongue - At night most plants take away oxygen; this plant gives oxygen. It absorbs toxins such as nitrogen oxides and formaldehyde. It can tolerate low light and irregular watering, and in the winter only needs to be watered a few times. I have no idea why it is called "Mother-in-law's Tongue" and maybe I don't want to know why. (www.sustainablebabysteps.com)



Chinese Evergreen - This plant also emits high oxygen content and purifies indoor air by removing the chemicals formaldehyde, benzene and other toxins. This plant does best in full shade. The sap of this plant is considered poisonous and is an irritant, so should probably be placed out of reach of children and our furry friends as well. (www.sustainablebabysteps.com)



Bamboo Palm - This plant is a native of Mexico and Central and South America. It thrives indoors in low light and can stand climates anywhere from 55- 85 degrees, and can withstand temperatures as low as 40 degrees without damage. Allow soil to drain all excess water. (www.havenforhouseplants.com)



Aloe Vera - Not only is this little plant great for burns and cuts, but it made NASA's top ten list of houseplants to improve air quality. It helps keep your home or office free from Benzene, which is found in paint, and most chemical cleaners, and this plant is almost impossible to kill! So it would be an ideal first plant.



I hope I was able to bring you a little insight on how important our little green friends are to our wellbeing here on this planet. Not only do we depend on them for oxygen, but we can now see how beneficial and how important they are in purifying and removing toxins from our indoor environments. I hope you feel empowered by this information, and go buy yourself a houseplant!

Happy Houseplant Hunting!!

Report link: <http://ntrs.nasa.gov/archive/nasa/casi.ntrs.nasa.gov/19930073077.pdf>



Below is a list of the ten top rated air purifiers. You can see from the description which will suit your household best! For example, some help with mold. The presence of mold in your house can cause runny noses, coughing, and sneezing. For mold problems you should look for an air purifier with a HEPA filter to capture mold spores.

The best air purifiers contain silver to kill mold and prevent growth. For germs and bacteria you need a purifier with a high performance HEPA filter. (www.air-purifiers-america.com)

For pets you would need a purifier for pet odor and dander. A HEPA filter to remove pet dander, and a unit that contains carbon and odor absorbing additives to remove odors. There are even air purifiers aimed at giving you a better night's sleep by drowning out noises that can wake you up at night.

In no particular order are a few air purifiers for your consideration:

#1

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/airpura-r600-hepa-air-purifier?variant=876825855>

The Airpura R600 is an all-purpose, basic unit, powerful and effective in large spaces.

- Best for odors, light chemicals and light smoke
- Coverage: large rooms (up to 2000 sq. ft).
- Filter Type: 18 Pounds of carbon, HEPA filter and pre-filter included.
- Color options: available in black, white, and cream
- Warranty: 5-year limited warranty

#2

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/austin-air-healthmate-air-purifier>

The Austin Air HealthMate, made in the USA, is a low maintenance unit for large spaces.

- Best for: odors, light chemicals and smoke
- Coverage: large rooms (up to 1500 sq. ft.)
- Filter Type: 15 Pounds of Carbon, true HEPA filter and a pre-filter included
- Color Options: available in black, white, silver, sandstone and midnight blue
- Warranty: 5-year limited warranty



#3

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/alen-breathesmart-air-purifier-with-hepa-odorcell-filter>

The Alen Breathe Smart features intuitive controls, an elegant and customizable design, and surprisingly intelligent technology that deliver powerful, quiet performance.

- Best for odors and pets
- Coverage: large rooms (1100 sq ft)
- Filter type: HEPA-OdorCell filter
- 7 designer colors to personalize your BreatheSmart
- Lifetime Warranty - unique to Alen

#4

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/alen-t500-hepa-air-purifier-w-hepa-odorcell-filter>

The Alen T500 has the best value and performance in a surprisingly compact size.

- Best for odors, dust, and pets
- Coverage: small rooms (500 sq ft)
- Filter type: HEPA-OdorCell Filter
- 2 color option to complement your decor
- Lifetime warranty - unique to Alen

#5

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/austin-air-allergy-machine-air-purifier>

The Austin Air Allergy Machine, made in the USA, protects you from allergens in large spaces.

- Best for particles, odors, light smoke and chemicals
- Coverage: large rooms (up to 1500 sq. ft).
- Filter Type: HEGA Filter, True HEPA filter and a pre-filter included.
- Color options: available in black, white, silver, sandstone and midnight blue
- Warranty: 5-year limited warranty



#6

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/alen-breathesmart-fit50-hepa-air-purifier-with-hepa-odorcell-filter>

The NEW BreatheSmart FIT50 is reduced in size and ultra-quiet.

- Best for odors and pets
- Coverage: medium rooms (800 sq ft)
- 6 designer colors to personalize your FIT50
- Filter type: HEPA-OdorCell filter
- Lifetime warranty - unique to Alen

#7

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/austin-air-bedroom-machine-air-purifier-5?variant=858655579>

The Austin Air Bedroom Machine, backed by the National Sleep Foundation, is ideal for those with sleep concerns.

- Best for smoke, odors, chemicals
- Coverage: large rooms (up to 1500 sq. ft).
- Filter Type: 15 Pounds of treated carbon, HEGA Filter, True HEPA filter and a pre-filter included.
- Color options: available in black, white, silver, sandstone and midnight blue
- Warranty: 5-year limited warranty

#8

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/austin-air-pet-machine-air-purifier>

The Austin Air Pet Machine, made in the USA, targets both dander and pet odor.

- Designed to remove pet odors and dander
- Coverage: large rooms (1500 sq ft)
- HEPA technology to trap airborne dust and dander
- Manufacturer's 5-year limited warranty
- Color Options: Available in black, midnight blue, sandstone, silver and white



#9

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/austin-air-allergy-machine-junior-air-purifier?variant=861746875>

The Austin Air Allergy Machine Junior, made in the USA, protects you from allergens in smaller spaces.

- Best for particles, light odors, light smoke and light chemicals
- Coverage: medium rooms (up to 700 sq. ft).
- Filter Type: HEGA Filter, True HEPA filter and a pre-filter included.
- Color Options: available in black, white, silver, sandstone and midnight blue
- Warranty: 5-year limited warranty

#10

<http://www.air-purifiers-america.com/products/sharp-fp-a60uw-air-purifier>

Experience the combined power of HEPA filter, carbon filter, and Plasmacluster Ion Technology.

- Best for allergies, asthma, dust, mold, pets
- Coverage: small rooms (341 sq ft)
- Filter Type: HEPA
- Warranty: 1 Year

AIR QUALITY: BEST CASE SCENARIO

The absolute best case scenario when it comes to the environment that optimizes your breathing experience is being outside in nature. The more trees, plants, and water in the environment, the better. The benefits of breathing fresh clean air outside are significant.

Research shows that spending time in fresh air,
surrounded by nature, increases energy in
90 percent of people².



² *Journal of Environmental Psychology, Volume 30, Issue 2, June 2010, Pages 159-168*



THE POWER OF TREES



As many of you may remember from grade school, trees dump a significant amount of oxygen into our environment each and every day. Being surrounded by trees when breathing is, without a doubt, the best place to be.

Trees absorb carbon dioxide through their leaves and break it down, releasing oxygen into the air. One mature tree can produce enough oxygen for up to 18 people, depending on the size and type of tree³.

Finding time on a daily, or at the very least, weekly basis to spend some time with the trees would make a drastic change in your quality of life. Simply going for a walk at your local park or even around your neighborhood can have a significant impact on your health and wellness.

³ IIP Digital, *Trees Help Us Breathe*, Karin Rives, May 24 2011



THE WATER WE DRINK

The significance of water and the impact it has on our bodies may be one of the most overlooked variables. Not drinking enough water throughout the day and not getting high quality water are two things that, when addressed, can have a HUGE impact on your health.

HOW IMPORTANT IS WATER TO THE BODY?

When you reduce 1% of the water to your body you will be thirsty.

When you reduce it by 5%, muscle strength and endurance are compromised.

When you reduce it by 10%, delirium and blurred vision occur.

If you reduce it by 20%, you will die⁴

Some other fun facts about water:

- Men's bodies are 60% water
- Women's bodies are 50% water
- The human brain is about 75% water!!!

Tissue	%Water
Blood	83%
Heart	79%
Muscle	76%
Brain	75%
Skin	72%



To say that water is essential to optimizing the function of our bodies is clearly an understatement.

TIPS ON WATER QUALITY

Best

- Water in glass containers
- Natural Spring Water
- Artesian or Spring Waters
- Mineral Water
- LifeSource Water Systems
- pH Prescription Water Systems

Avoid

- Plastic containers when possible
 - Distilled water, all minerals and nutrients are removed
 - Tap water
 - Reverse Osmosis Water
-



LOVE YOUR WATER BEFORE YOU DRINK IT!

This may sound a little odd, but once you've read Masaru Emotto's *Hidden Messages in Water*, you may love your water like you never have before.

Emotto's work with water is quite fascinating. The energy and consciousness of water that he demonstrated was quite astounding and not something to take lightly.

Dr Emotto placed water in containers and simply created an intention with each container of water. Some of the Intentions he used were Love, Gratitude, and Hate. After he did this, he analyzed the water crystals in each container, and this is what he saw:



I LOVE YOU



THANK YOU



I HATE YOU

When you think that we are made mostly of water and that our given emotional state **LITERALLY** changes the very characteristics of water, it really makes you stop and think about what emotional state you are in, when not only ingesting water, but any food.

TIP

***LOVE AND BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR WATER & ANYTHING ELSE YOU PUT
IN YOUR BODY!***



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