# How to Outsmart Chronic Inflammation

**5 MIN READ**

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# New research uncovered the lifestyle shifts, inspired by traditional populations, that protect your body from inflammation.

Inflammation has long been cast as one of aging's inevitable villains. The term *inflammaging*, or chronic, low-grade inflammation rising with age, has emerged as a key concept in understanding how inflammation impacts healthspan. It's linked to **heart disease**, diabetes, dementia, and other age-related conditions. But a groundbreaking new study in ***Nature Aging*** challenges the idea that inflammaging is universal or unavoidable.

Researchers compared inflammatory markers across four diverse populations: two industrialized groups (Italy and Singapore) and two indigenous, nonindustrialized groups, the Tsimane of the Bolivian Amazon and the Orang Asli from Malaysia. They found that the classic inflammaging pattern emerged strongly in the industrialized groups but was virtually absent or very different in the indigenous populations. More strikingly, in these traditional lifestyles, inflammation didn't rise with age, nor was it tied to chronic diseases.

**What does this mean?** Inflammaging may be a byproduct of industrialized living, resulting from our modern diets, sedentary habits, social stressors, and environmental exposures, rather than an inescapable biological fate. The Tsimane and Orang Asli move more, they eat diets rich in fiber and antioxidants, live closely connected to community and nature, and face daily physical challenges that keep their immune

systems primed but balanced. There are many elements of this lifestyle that we can adapt in into our own lives.

# How You Can Decrease The Likelihood of Inflammaging

This study offers a powerful reframe for healthy aging: *The trajectory of your aging immune system is not prewritten.* You have agency to reshape your biology by addressing the lifestyle factors driving chronic inflammation. And while we can't fully replicate traditional lifestyles, we can embrace some of their core elements.

**1. Move Like Your Ancestors**
The indigenous groups live active, varied lives, walking miles daily, working with their hands, and connecting with nature. We can replicate that by moving intentionally: **walking outdoors**, practicing **strength training**, and varying our physical activity to avoid sitting too much.

**2. Eat to Nourish, Not Inundate**
Processed foods, excess sugar, and industrial oils fuel inflammation. Instead, prioritize whole, plant-forward meals rich in fiber, antioxidants, and omega-3s. Think **Mediterranean diet** staples like leafy greens, nuts, olive oil, and wild-caught fish. Check out these **longevity pantry staples** for inspiration.

**3. Harness Mindfulness and Stress Resilience**
Chronic psychosocial stress amplifies inflammatory signals. Mindfulness meditation, breathwork, and contemplative practices can modulate immune function and quell systemic inflammation. These are **the best mindfulness practices for lowering stress**.

**4. Cultivate Deep Social Roots**

Isolation and loneliness exacerbate inflammation. Social health is built on a variety of types and levels of interaction: those closest to us, our chosen communities (neighbors, teammates, coworkers, hobby groups, or others with whom we share some identity), even so-called “weak ties” with people we don’t know well but share friendly exchanges with. **Here’s how to prioritize meaningful connection**.

**5. Detox Your Environment**

Pollutants, plastics, and chemical exposures are stealth drivers of inflammation. We’re still learning exactly how these toxins affect the body. Minimize exposure by filtering water, choosing clean personal care products, and spending time in nature. Here are some of the ways you can **cut down on microplastic exposure**.

By integrating ancestral wisdom with cutting-edge science, we can decrease the toxic inflammation baked into industrialized lifestyles.

## A Micropractice for Today

Take five minutes now: step outside, feel the earth beneath your feet, breathe deeply, and let your mind settle on one thing you’re grateful for. This simple grounding moment, repeated daily, is a powerful practice to tune in to what matters most.

The science is clear: longevity and vitality are as much about environment and lifestyle as they are about time. What you choose today shapes the quality of your tomorrow. Inflammaging may be real, but it’s not your destiny.

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