



# MIGRAINE RESCUE TOOLBOX

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10 Natural Ways to Beat a  
Migraine Before it Starts

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## 10 NATURAL WAYS TO BEAT A MIGRAINE BEFORE IT STARTS, EVEN IF YOU HAVE TRIED EVERYTHING YOUR DOCTOR RECOMMENDS

Do you feel like you've exhausted the "go-to migraine treatments"... the elimination diet, Botox, daith ear piercing, triptans, chiropractic, and massage? In just a few years of chasing treatments, it is easy to run the gamut of suggestions and still feel at the mercy of a barometric pressure change or our hormones.

The #1 question I get at my Migraine workshops and on social media is, "Erin, I've already tried everything that is recommended for migraines. I've seen so many specialists and yet, I still have migraines several times a month. What else can I do?"

Even though my mission is to help people work on the root causes of their migraines, I know you want something you can implement right away. Of course, how can you begin to think about the deep, underlying biochemical stressors when your head is throbbing and you are just trying to make it through the day?

I've been there. For a decade, migraines ruled my life. Even when I had implemented all of the so-called migraine-strategies and thought I had them "in control", I feared the thunderstorms that came every summer and avoided meeting my girlfriends at the mall if I was already getting a headache; because I knew the terrible fluorescent lights and perfumed air could set off a migraine. Instead, I put on a smile over the pain and showed up for the networking event, but didn't make many relationships because it was all I could do to just BE there.

Having watched my mom suffer from migraines as I grew up and have to miss out on parties and sometimes feel too sick to share dinner with us, I thought that if you were someone who got migraines, finding a prescription that helped and trying to avoid triggers was about as good as it got. That meant you had your migraines under control.

Like you, I learned some tricks for responding to the early warning signs of a migraine: have some caffeine, maybe a sports drink and take a few ibuprofen was my usual routine. Then came the question, "To take the prescription or not to take it?" I knew if I took it quickly, it usually worked for me. But I also had a limited supply because my doctor didn't want me to develop rebound headaches.

So, instead, I took more over-the-counter painkillers. Little did I realize that the things I was doing to desperately ward off a headache turning into a full-blown migraine weren't helping me build health in the



long term. For some, caffeine can contribute to rebound headaches, and ibuprofen was tearing up my gut. This led to more serious consequences down the road when I developed multiple food sensitivities and malabsorption. If only I knew then what I understand now!

When people come to work with me to improve their health and reduce the impact of migraines in their lives, we go deep. We look at imbalances in their hormones, digestion, detoxification, and immune systems, and typically discover a number of healing opportunities. Whether or not you are ready to commit to yourself to work on your health at that level, I do want to share some more natural ways to stop a migraine before it even starts; sharing some alternatives to the ol' caffeine and tablet routine.



## HOW TO USE THIS TOOLBOX

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In this guide, you'll find 10 of the most effective ways I have found to quickly lower the stress response in your body and short-circuit a migraine. Are we curing migraines in a single book? **Of course not.**

My intent is to give you tools to use at the earliest signs, or at times when you know you are typically prone to migraines, to avoid getting a full-blown doozy in the first place.

If you feel a blister coming on, do you stop and adjust your shoe, or do you continue walking until your toe is bleeding? It's a decision you make for yourself, to take care of yourself.

First, understand that stress compounds. If you have an especially stressful day or week coming up, then you need to pay extra attention to other triggers that you can avoid, such as red wine, chocolate or MSG. If you know you are more prone to migraines during allergy season, or when thunderstorms are in the forecast (things that you can't control), then reign in the things that you can control, like going to bed and getting up at the same time or eating a clean diet.

Yes, I am asking you to invest some time in self-care but, in the end, my clients tell me that slowing down for a couple of hours can prevent days of missed work and that getting a bit behind in life, in general, is worth it if they can avoid a terrible headache.

If you are scared to go completely au natural (and I get where you are coming from), do a couple of these in conjunction with your current drugs of choice until you don't need to anymore. (

Ultimately, I want you to discover freedom from migraines and not have to worry about things like constantly avoiding triggers or leaving your house without your prescription. I know that transforming your health can take several months and you need a toolbox of tricks to soothe and reduce migraines in the meantime, that's why I put together this list of the top 10 things that helped me when I wanted more natural alternatives and that my clients are reporting to be most effective right now.

If something comes up that is typically a significant trigger for you; for example, thunderstorms are rolling through town or it is "that time of the month", pull out your migraine rescue toolbox and get busy!



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## 1. Try turmeric tea

**Why:** Turmeric is an amazingly powerful anti-inflammatory. While not as fast-acting as NSAIDS, it is impressive if you take it 2-3 days in a row.

**When:** Since it is very unlikely to help when you are during a migraine or even a severe headache, it is most useful if you know in advance you are going to try to wean yourself off ibuprofen, caffeine, or say... take on a new weight lifting regimen that is going to give you a lot of sore muscles in your shoulders and neck.

**How:**

1. Make turmeric tea by boiling fresh sliced turmeric root in water for 5-10min. You can flavor with fresh ginger and lemongrass for additional health benefits. I make a large pot so that I can sip several times a day for 3-4 days.
2. Make yogi's golden milk by simmering a pinch of powdered turmeric in coconut milk or almond milk. Sweeten with a small amount of honey. Enjoy morning and evening.

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## 2. Take the right kind of magnesium

**Why?** It's no secret that magnesium helps many people with migraines reduce the frequency and severity of their episodes. It is a common recommendation but, even more commonly gone wrong. There is a multitude of benefits from correcting a magnesium deficiency. When a woman I was working with, Rebecca, switched from magnesium oxide to magnesium malate at the right amount for her, she couldn't believe that she started going weeks without headaches, and finally broke her 1-bar per day chocolate addiction, and became noticeably less constipated.

**When?** If you are generally under extra stress, noticing muscle tension, leg cramping, cravings for dark chocolate or dark leafy greens.

**How?** If you aren't feeling any different, it's possible you haven't tried the right form since most supplements are produced with the cheaper, but less bio-available forms magnesium oxide and magnesium citrate. There are many better alternatives, my favorite being magnesium malate or a topical magnesium gel/oil.

How do you know if it is helping you? When I take magnesium, I can tell that I sleep more soundly and have less muscle tension in my shoulders. When I haven't taken any in a long time, I can tell I am more likely to crave chocolate and get calf cramps. There is no one perfect dosage and we need different amounts during different times, depending on how much stress our bodies are trying to process.

I help clients start slowly and ramp up while listening to the signals that their body is sending. In addition to magnesium, a very high-quality multi-mineral can be supportive, since our soil tends to be depleted and, sadly, even a healthy diet doesn't include the nutrients it once did. If you don't like trial and error, a hair and mineral analysis and/or Organic Acids urinary profile are key tools I use to help clients fine-tune their supplement regimes during the DIVE phase of the Migraine Freedom™ Plan.



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### 3. Ice on head, feet in warm water

**Why:** The idea is that putting your feet in warm water and holding a cold pack to your head draws the blood away from the head and relieves some of the pressure and swelling.

**When:** When you feel an aura or early warning signs that a migraine is coming. ([Read more about early warning signs](#))

**How:** Hold a cold pack to your neck and head while you soak your feet in a tub or bucket of warm water. This works best at the first twinge – so in that sense not very practical at work unless you get creative. Keep a cold pack or two in the break room freezer and use a heating pad on your feet or space heater under your desk, if allowed.

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### 4. Give your whole nervous system a chill pill and break free from fight or flight.

**Why:** Reset your nervous system. When you do this you will be able to make clearer decisions, open your brain to creativity, resulting in being more productive and effective and reducing stress. ([Read more about the established link between anxiety & migraines.](#))

**When:** When you feel frantic, overwhelmed and overworked. If the idea of sitting down to meditate seems ludicrous because you are on high-alert, then these tips are for you.

**How:**

- Breathing exercises, like a technique called “box breathing”. So you’ve heard that focusing on your breath is a good relaxation technique, but every time you try it in yoga class you get bored and distracted. Try box breathing, which you can easily find instructions or videos for online. The measured breaths and holds somehow take just enough mental focus to calm your mind. Weird, I know, but try it.
- Vetiver essential oil. Sure, you know lavender is relaxing and lots of essential oils are soothing. Nothing compares to Vetiver though for calming the monkey minds and helping me relax into sleep. In minutes, I can feel my nervous system decompress and it is my go-to oil for when I feel like my mind is racing. Think lavender on steroids!
- Yoga/ambient music channel on your streaming service while you are working on a project or something around the house. My favorite album is Mantras for Divine Grace. My Ayurvedic practicing primary care practitioner recommended this to me a couple years back. At first, I thought, oh I’ve tried music and it is relaxing but doesn’t make that much difference. The right music though gets straight to your essence and can be profound. Give it another shot. You will know you found the right one when it totally chills you out. If you are bored or your mind is wandering, it is not the right pick for you.
- If I am really stressed or trying to calm down, I just listen and lay down for half an hour – particularly if I am too wound up to sit still and enjoy meditating. For example, if I’m staying in a hotel room and had a long day at a conference. I know historically that the stress of traveling and going to all-day events used to give me migraines so, to be proactive, I take some time during a break or at night to listen to relaxing music as a mini-meditation.





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## 5. Stay on top of muscle tension

**Why:** Although lots of articles and doctors will tell you tension headaches are separate and caused by different things than a migraine, in my experience, tension headaches can become or trigger migraine headaches, if left unchecked. That makes them worth paying attention to.

**When:** At the first sign of neck and shoulder tension or jaw tension, pull out your tool kit.

**How:** I recommend a neck wrap you can heat up in the microwave and using a cooling essential oil blend or muscle rub on your neck and shoulders. My favorite essential oil blend has many herbs, including peppermint as well as frankincense. Mix your own blend or try PastTense® from [doTERRA®](#), which comes in a roller bottle and has helped many clients skip their usual NSAIDS.

I sent Kristin, a client, a bottle this oil when she told me she couldn't get one of the labs completed because she kept having to take ibuprofen (which wasn't recommended within 48hrs of the test because it affects gut permeability). She had had the kit in her house for months and every time she was about to take it, she'd get a headache and take ibuprofen before it could turn into a migraine. She was astounded at how well the oils worked to cut the tension, and started keeping it at her desk for a little refreshing pick-me-up during the day. Within a week, she had the kit shipped in!

I also used to go for monthly chiropractic adjustments because I found that if I waited much more than 4 weeks, I would start to get a lot of tightness in my neck and more severe headaches and migraines. It was kind of a preventative thing, but I also wondered why I couldn't hold the adjustment longer since my chiropractor said usually after several months of treatment his patients would only need to come back once or twice a year. After I worked on my hormones, digestion, and especially detoxification, I no longer required monthly adjustments to stay pain-free! The underlying chronic stress in my body had been showing up physically.

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## 6. Change your environment

**Why:** Many migraine sufferers will report that bad lighting, artificial smells, and noisy environments can trigger their migraines. Even though they don't trigger migraines for me anymore, I seem to be more sensitive to these environmental stimuli and am happier and more productive if I avoid them.

**When:** Especially during the HEAL phase of the Migraine Freedom™ Plan is a good time to look around and see what kind of changes you can make in your day to day environment. You can expect to build resilience to these factors over time but, why not give yourself the proper environment to de-stress on all levels and let your body recover?

**How:** If you work in a private or semi-private office, see if you can shut off half of the overhead lights and supplement with some warmer incandescent lighting. Bring in a lamp from home (salt rock lamps are my favorite).

Try out colored lenses (blue-blocking lenses are widely available now and Irlen lenses can be helpful). Wear sunglasses in the grocery store if they help! Use ear plugs or noise canceling headphones liberally. On your



commute, you might use glasses that block out all light like Black Out Bands. Just appreciating the fact that some of us are more sensitive to external stimuli than others will go a long way toward making your office a gentler place for you to work pain-free.

Ask if you can work from home before the migraine starts. Are you better off contributing on your terms than being out sick?

If you get pushback about implementing some of these changes, ask for a doctor's note requiring the environmental or ergonomic adjustments that you need (your own office, standing desk, etc.). Why are we happy to go in and ask for a painkiller prescription but not for validation of our physical needs?

With the massive burden that migraines have on economic productivity, you will actually be doing your company a favor by helping to shape an environment that you can be productive in.

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## 7. Mind your blood sugar

**Why:** Your liver plays an integral part in creating and metabolizing hormones, including adrenal hormones, sex hormones, and insulin. If you keep your liver busy responding to blood sugar spikes from your diet, it will continue to be stressed and will not function at peak levels.

**When:** Especially during the HEAL phase of the Migraine Freedom™ Plan, when we are focused on rebalancing hormones and supporting the liver.

**How:** This is a bigger topic than I can cover in this short book, which is why I developed resources around the Migraine Freedom Diet but, at a minimum, keep snacks with healthy fats and proteins in your desk drawer or purse to avoid blood sugar crashes. Examples include nuts, bars made from coconut or MCT oil, jerky (no MSG!), canned fish, and healthy canned soups. Avoid instant noodles, candy bars, soda or sugary drinks, dried fruit, cookies or poor quality snack bars.

Even seemingly healthy "organic" granola bars or cereal bars can be "quick burning" fuel for many of us and can contribute to a blood sugar spike. After we have the basics nailed down in the Migraine Freedom Diet, I work with people to fine tune and customize their diets from there because, even though there are certain principles that make for a good starting point, I don't believe there is a one-size-fits-all perfect diet.

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## 8. Scalp massage for weather migraines

**Why?** Thunderstorms and barometric pressure changes used to be a HUGE trigger for me. In fact, my first full-blown migraine started during a thunderstorm and lasted for days until the weather cleared. I thought I might be dying if it weren't for the fact that I remembered my mom also suffered from thunderstorm-related migraines.

When I started getting monthly deep-tissue massages as a preventative measure for my migraines, I was incredibly lucky in that my massage therapist had a history of migraines herself and had studied many techniques to reduce them. In particular, she worked on my scalp once or twice to loosen tight areas and, in her words, "Make more room for the fluid to expand." It worked in reducing the severity of these migraines!



**When?** Don't wait for the thunderstorms. Try to find a specialized massage therapist now.

**How?** Contact several massage therapists and try to work with one who has a personal history of migraines/thunderstorm triggers because they are most likely to be experts on this secret technique.

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## 9. Switch to natural antihistamines

**Why:** If seasonal allergies and a stuffy nose seem to trigger more migraines for you, try a natural approach to balancing your inflammatory response. Some people are more prone to migraines during allergy season, not just because of the sinus pressure, but because when your body is on high alert and your immune system is responding to pollen as if it was a foreign invader, your total internal stress level is higher.

If you choose to avoid over-the-counter antihistamines because of their side-effects, try a natural antihistamine this year!

**When:** During the months that you historically are most prone to allergies.

**How:** My first favorite natural antihistamine is quercetin, a compound concentrated from foods such as apples that is amazing for balancing inflammation and the immune reactions.

The second is a combination of lemon, lavender and peppermint [essential oils](#). I have one client who isn't otherwise into essential oils at all but loves to tell people how, after years of taking over the counter antihistamines that were overly drying, she hasn't needed them for two springs since starting to use this blend of oils seasonally.

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## 10. Emotional Freedom Technique

**Why:** Are you prone to getting migraines when you have a deadline or must present a report to your team? Do you get migraines at Thanksgiving because talking to Aunt Mary stresses you out at a level you don't even want to acknowledge? If you know certain situations are causing you negative stress, and you can't avoid them, there is a powerful technique you can use to snap out of toxic moods called the [Emotional Freedom Technique](#).

**When:** As you approach stressful situations and toxic emotional environments, use this trick to release the tension it is creating in your body.

**How:** You can easily learn the basic EFT tapping technique from free videos online. A coach can guide you through more advanced techniques, or help you find the right language for your situation.

I learned the hard way how much toxic emotions and emotional stressors impact our biology. When I was 27, my health started to fall apart beyond the migraines. Even though I'd been managing my life around migraines for years and living a relatively healthy lifestyle as a result, I suddenly was dealing with chronic GI issues, shooting nerve pain that made it difficult to sleep or even focus on work, and an insane level of fatigue. When I looked back to what was going on in my life around the time this all started, a good friendship turned toxic had been keeping me up at nights in anguish.





Later, I could pinpoint that it wasn't just travel that gave me migraines, it was also about where I was going and who I was spending time with. I had to dig deep into the roots of this with counselors and coaches and, eventually, learned many techniques to deal with this and not have to run away from the situations.

Not being trained to specifically help people with mental-emotional stressors myself, I usually steer clear of this; other than to help people recognize that it is a factor and offer this simple tool that offers a quick way to interrupt the nervous system when needed. If a client recognizes during the DIVE or HEAL phase of the Migraine Freedom program that certain relationships or stressful situations are triggers, then we make sure that they get connected to resources or professionals that can help.

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## Get to the root cause!!!

**Why?** Just like you probably have, I tried everything that my doctors recommended to me and then, at some point, felt stuck. I had tried an elimination diet, antidepressants, triptans, chiropractic, massage, and more. Once I got to a point where I could manage the migraines instead of having them multiple times per week, and would only get them occasionally, I resigned myself to the idea that I would manage these for the rest of my life. Just like my mom had while I was growing up.

When I discovered Functional Nutrition, I realized that these migraines were connected to my fatigue and digestive issues. At the root of it all, my hormones were out of whack from chronic stress; I was highly reactive to most of the foods I was eating in what most people would have called a healthy diet; and I had accumulated heavy metals in my body because I am genetically predisposed to poor detoxification pathways.

It was certainly a journey to unravel all of these connections and implement the lifestyle changes I needed to restore balance in my body, but it was also a relief to get answers. To be able to see the weak links that needed support and that I wasn't crazy for thinking that in my late 20s I should be enjoying a healthy, vibrant life... not dragging myself around in pain.

Slowly but surely, my energy came back and, without even realizing it, my migraines had disappeared. At first, you don't trust it, you are still waiting for the next migraine to come. It takes a few months for the reality to sink in and for you to fully appreciate the sense of freedom.

**When:** When you are tired of managing migraines. When you are tired of being afraid of your trigger foods, of traveling, of going out to a noisy restaurant or a too-bright mall. When you are ready to invest time and energy into lasting lifestyle changes that build resilience and the freedom to thrive. When you realize the migraines aren't just impacting you, but your most important relationships.

**How?** You could easily spend five years figuring this out by trial and error – just like I did. As a pharmaceutical engineer, I have a passion for health and understanding the science behind how different modalities can help us so, spending hours a day studying functional nutrition, natural health, and the cutting-edge clinicians was fascinating for me. Spending tens of thousand of dollars on treatments that only sometimes helped was a little more frustrating.



When I looked back and realized that I was no longer living in fear that a migraine would hit every time I had encountered a migraine trigger – I knew I had to share what I had learned to make this process easier for other people in my shoes. If I could help someone like my mom, who I saw suffer and sit out on the sidelines with a migraine during holidays, vacations, and sometimes struggle through day-to-day things like grocery shopping, then all the effort would be worth it.

I reverse engineered the pivotal steps to come up with the Migraine Freedom™ plan. This is the blueprint I take women through to help them stop living life on the sidelines and start participating again!

## The Migraine Freedom™ Plan has 4 steps – Dream, Dive, Heal, Thrive.



**1. DREAM** about what would life look like if you were migraine free.

You've probably had migraines for so long it is hard to imagine but I want you to recognize how much migraines are impacting your life and your family.

I still remember the day I decided to go see a naturopath. I had been burned-out and suffering with a lot of pain and fatigue for months. Doctors had told me they couldn't help me so I really didn't know what to do. I would come home from work and just lay on the couch after work like a zombie. I can remember one day when my boyfriend asked if I didn't love him anymore. I just had no energy for the relationship at all. I was trying to drag myself through each day and hadn't even realized how my poor health was impacting this important relationship. That moment really helped me realize that I needed to get help.

In DREAM, we will think about how migraines are impacting your earning potential, productivity, and your relationships. We will also ask, "What else is it holding you back from doing?"



**2. DIVE** into your health data.

Just because you have migraines and all kinds of triggers, **you're not crazy!** We will prove it with functional lab data and we will find the root causes.

I would often go to parties, even though I didn't feel like it, just because I felt like, "Oh, I have a headache," is such an overused excuse. Plus, I didn't want people to think I was making it up. Even when I was blinded with pain, I would feel bad leaving work early, worried that I'd be perceived as less productive or not contributing.

In DIVE, the second phase of the Migraine Freedom™ Plan, we look at patterns in your hormones, digestion, detoxification, and immune systems to find hidden imbalances. Clients tell me they learn about their bodies more in this step than after years of going to neurologists and other doctors.





**3. HEAL** by treating your body to the conditions and support it needs to heal and repair itself.

Discover intensive self-care... in a way that is approachable for a busy professional.

I was a busy engineer when I was going through all of this, so I know it isn't necessarily possible for you to cut out of life and spend six months at a yoga retreat while you heal.

In HEAL, the third phase of the Migraine Freedom™ Plan, we will work together to find ways to get it in and still get you where you need to be.



**4. THRIVE** achieve freedom and return to participating in life again, sustaining the healthy habits that got you there in a realistic and simple way.

As you can see, this really isn't for someone who wants a quick fix. There are plenty of pills for that, and there is always going to be a demand for that. For those few that are fed up with chasing triggers and managing symptoms, and who are ready to work at a root cause level – this is for you.

## CONCLUSION

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For anyone who lives a life affected by migraine headaches, being able to live pain-free often seems like a chimera; a grotesque product of the imagination and fantasy that leads to hope unrealized and profound, lasting disappointment. It's nothing but a pipedream – a mirage we know we will never reach.

And yet, as I hope I've shown above, some of us have reached that place. And, I'm here to tell you that **you can reach that place too!**

The way to do that is to stop treating your symptoms, as conventional medicine has (and would continue to have you do), and find the root causes. Whatever that constellation of causes may be in your case, and as we all know it's rarely a single thing, you now have a selection of tools at your disposal to rescue yourself from your migraines.

### Here is My Hope for You

If you gain nothing else from this eBook, my greatest wish is that you at least find hope – the belief that, because I and others have found the path to move beyond chronic migraine pain – you can find your own path to pain-free living too.

Yes, it may not be easy. Yes, it will take time. But, if you are willing to commit to taking the steps required to feel better, you can also get there.



Whether you choose to work with me or not, at least I've provided you with a Tool Box for progress in your battle against migraines. Read it... Study it... Use it... Don't give up... Get better... You deserve it!

## Let Me Help You Get Started on the Path to Pain-free Living

If you're ready to get started along the path to a life free from migraines, I'm ready to help. I offer multiple programs designed to help you on your personal journey to pain-free living, from 1:1 Coaching to Online Classes and even my Migraine Blog. The best way to get started for most though, is my FREE Monthly Migraine Webinars. Registration is quick and easy and I have a new event every month.

Click here to Register for my next [FREE Migraine Webinar](#).

Or...

Click here to get answers and see if we can work together, with [your no-obligation Headache Consultation](#).

### ABOUT ERIN

Erin Knight helps women who desire natural solutions providing freedom from migraines, so that they can experience a dramatic increase in productivity and thrive in the active life that they dream of.

Having suffered with migraines for over a decade, Erin is sympathetic to the impact that headaches have on our work and social life. After discovering functional medicine and realizing her migraines disappeared as she balanced her hormones and fixed her digestion, she started her company, Engineering Radiance, to help women who are frustrated with the conventional management of migraines and want to get to the root causes.

Erin has her Masters of Engineering from the University of Michigan and is trained in Functional Diagnostic Nutrition™ and nutrigenomics. After a decade guiding Fortune 500 teams through root cause analysis, she now applies these problem-solving skills to our most complex system - the human body.

Erin shares implementation strategies for achieving radiant health through online classes, corporate workshops, and 1:1 consulting. She has a goal of helping a million women discover freedom from their migraine headaches.



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