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# The basics of detox

**DETOX IS ABOUT SIMPLIFYING** your life. It's about making choices that benefit your vitality, clear out the dross and ground you in what's really important in life. The detox message from the marketplace, though, is not so simple. We can become bamboozled by a large array of super pills and powders promising easy and effective detox. While many herbs and nutrients are wonderful supports for cleansing, don't underestimate the simple things that provide the greatest support to enhance detoxification.

Detoxification processes are constantly occurring in healthy bodies. Once we slow or stop ingesting, applying and breathing toxic substances, the body naturally starts to remove them at a rate the detoxification organs can manage. The body responds to gentle changes and care. Cutting back slowly rather than stopping abruptly is less stressful for the body and, although slower and requiring more discipline, is well worth the effort.

## EXERCISE

Exercise motivates the detoxification organs to get a move on. The lungs, skin, liver and kidneys increase function to manage the higher physical demands of exercise. Increasing the heart rate increases the blood pumping throughout the body. The lungs work harder, bringing in more oxygen and releasing more carbon dioxide. Muscles are fed oxygen-rich blood, while waste products are picked up for removal by the lungs or kidneys, often via the liver. Additionally, sweat beads on the skin cool the body and provide an exit for toxins. Traditionally, the Chinese recommend sweating every day to enhance longevity.

The intensity and amount of time dedicated to cardio matters, too. A lot depends on your current level of fitness. About 30 minutes a day is safe for most people. If totally new to exercise, start with 20 minutes and incrementally increase the time and intensity. There are many yoga asanas that aid detoxification by squeezing and massaging internal organs, flooding them with blood to supply fresh nutrition and remove wastes.

## VEGETABLES

The power of vegetables cannot be understated during a detox. Let them be homegrown, biodynamic, organic, local and seasonal, but let them be in abundance. Vegetables are rich in repairing antioxidants and fibre to keep things moving. If your garden space or budget doesn't provide access to vegetables grown without pesticides, buy conventional vegetables that generally require less spraying, such as onion, avocado, sweetcorn, pineapple, asparagus, sweet peas, eggplant, broccoli, tomato and sweet potato. If possible,

invest in certified organic peaches, apples, bell pepper, celery, nectarines, strawberries, kale, lettuce, grapes, carrots, pears and all other crops that traditionally are heavily sprayed.

There are a few approaches that may minimise the pesticide remnants on sprayed produce. Soaking vegetables in a sink of water with apple cider vinegar for a few hours may help neutralise the reactivity of the sprays. Or make a paste with ricebran and water and soak the vegetables in it for 10 minutes. I have previously soaked conventional vegetables in bentonite clay in water, with the aim of the bentonite attracting and capturing pesticide residues. There doesn't seem to be any research to support this, but theoretically it makes sense. They do require a thorough rinsing afterwards, though.

Eat all the colours of the rainbow and reap the rewards of the antioxidant action of many coloured plant chemicals. Create a colourful array in your salads and vegetable servings — for example, a salad of red cabbage, avocado, mung beans, sunflower and poppy seeds with a squeeze of lemon juice; or steamed Brussels sprouts, squash, sweet potato, cauliflower and purple beans drizzled with virgin organic olive oil.

The preparation of vegetables makes a huge difference to taste. Try grated beetroot with umeboshi plum vinegar, or daikon radish sprinkled with salt-free tamari, or thin slices of carrots for crudités with your guacamole. The soluble and insoluble fibre from vegetables will improve the health of stools like nothing else. Constipation must be avoided during detox. Ideally, have one to three formed stools a day.

## HYDRATION

Water is so often underestimated during a detox. We all know that our bodies mostly consist of water, so it makes sense that refreshing this with pure water will assist in detoxification.

There's a parallel between mainstream attitudes towards the environment around us and the water environments inside us. So often the milieu is considered secondary to the functioning objects operating within it. Essentially, of course, if the environment isn't healthy, it can't support healthy function.

Replace daily losses (average two litres a day) with the purest water available. Water is increasingly polluted, whether through fluoride contamination, purification with chlorides or run-offs from industrial wastes. Collect from a spring, from the sky, or get it from the tap and filter it. Drink it to stoke the digestive fire and enhance cellular hydration by consuming an hour or so either side of meals.

## RELAXATION

Relaxation is another fundamental of effective detoxification. If the body is in go-go mode, energy is shunted away from the business of detoxification. Become aware of your pace in your world. Are you in a constant rush? Some rushing is good for you, but ensure you stop to rest once the stimulus has passed. Take time for yourself, even just a few minutes here and there throughout the day, to ground yourself in the present and allow a spacious breath.

Once these simple detoxification processes are incorporated, consider where the body needs support and then seek advice about what herbs, nutrients or other protocols will further assist your detoxification further. ☺

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