

# *The detox diet*

Although the body is designed to eliminate toxins, it can become overburdened by modern lifestyles and the environment we live in. **Chris James** looks at the practical steps of the detox diet and how it can benefit your yoga practice



Prana or 'life force' is the key operational element that holds essence, energy and spirit together. Everything that we eat, everything that we drink, the air that we breathe contains relative amounts of life force. The goal of Yogic and Taoist health regimes is to keep our pranic primordial batteries fully charged at all times, which means restoring essence, energy and spirit to their original state of purity. We do this by cultivating such disciplines as asana, pranayama, sexual yoga and meditation.

Our yoga practices must not be limited solely to the pursuit of perfection in asana or even pranayama, but in an overall system of regular detoxification that will lead to greater clarity, self discipline and equanimity of mind. There will, of course, be great benefits to the seen physical body that will undoubtedly improve your asana practice – if that's what you really want to do – but what I am concerned with here is how the detox diet within a framework of regular detoxification can lead to a whole enlightened attitude towards self and a new way of living.

### Toxicity

Unfortunately, despite the claims and so-called advancements of Western medicine, human health across the world is deteriorating at an alarming rate. Cancer, heart disease, liver infection, respiratory ailments, and nervous disorders, have spread like wildfire ravaging all segments of society. The prolonged degenerative illnesses that a century ago rarely manifested except in the weak and elderly, have now become everyday conditions in the young and adult population. We are producing a weak human generation for tomorrow.

The root cause is toxicity. The use of preservatives and additives in our food, our hectic lifestyles, chemically contaminated air and water, use of medical drugs have all contributed to our rajasic and tamasic lives and the systematic increase of toxicity in the body. The toxicity of the human body cannot be corrected by injections, Western invasive surgery or any hastily contrived remedies. The one and only way to counteract self-toxicification is by self-detoxification.

**“Food and drink are relied upon to nurture life. But if one does not know that the nature of substances may be opposed to each other, and one consumes them altogether indiscriminately, the vital organs will be thrown out of harmony and disastrous consequences will soon arise.”**

Chia Ming, Essential knowledge for Eating and Drinking, 1368



*Chris James, founder of the Urban Detox Diet*

### Detox facts

Regular detox is the best way to purge the body of accumulated poison. An effective detox will result in feeling clear-headed and relaxed, having easy digestion with regular bowel movements. With a fully functional and healthy digestive system you can remain physically fit and mentally active for your entire life, enjoying sound sleep and feeling refreshed on awakening, and of course, weight loss.

For any detox to be effective you must take at least three days of rest and relaxation, which is how long it takes for the body's internal cleansing and healing mechanisms to shift into full gear. Seven days is even better, because it takes seven days of complete rest and clean living to purify the blood stream and cleanse the internal organs and lymphatic system. Remember to set a date: make sure that you plan ahead and consult your diary. Try to choose a period of relative calm in your life when you attempt the detox, like a weekend. Try not to complete a detox programme when you have a busy patch at work.

The following cleansing and rejuvenating regimen detoxifies the system, purifies the bodily tissues, and strengthens the immune system. The recommendations may be included in a 3-day, 7-day, or 12-day detox programme. The basic dietary strategy for effective detox is to eliminate all acid-forming foods and beverages and imbibe only a few simple alkalisating foods. What you don't eat is actually more important than what you do eat.

Foods to avoid: all processed foods, especially sugar, wheat, dairy, hydrogenated oils, carbonated soft drinks, coffee and alcohol, which contribute to the acidosis of the blood, must be excluded from your diet. If you are a coffee fiend try to reduce the amount of coffee you take in the days leading up to your detox start date. The cornerstones of the detox diet are fresh fruits and fresh vegetables. There are various companies that will deliver to your door, or try your local fruit & veg market or farmers market.

The best choice in vegetables are the ones that actively heal and cleanse the body, including sweet potatoes, yams, squash, pumpkin, carrot, beetroot, cabbage, asparagus, celery, parsley, and all dark leafy greens. Garlic and ginger may also be included in the detox to spice up the taste of the vegetables.

*Yoga teacher Chris James is a sought after name on the international yoga circuit and regularly contributes to health and fitness pages in national newspapers and magazines. He is the founder of Chris James Yoga ([www.chrisjamesyoga.com](http://www.chrisjamesyoga.com)) and the Urban Yoga Detox.*

## The art of food combining

In comparison to Yogic and Taoist concepts of a balanced diet, the Western understanding of a balanced diet is perfunctory and over-simplistic. Western doctors advise the public to eat a little bit of everything with every meal, effectively combining such opposing ingredients as meat, milk, fat, bread and sugar. These ingredients will not blend efficiently in the body and eventually your system will grind to a premature halt.

Some food groups combine well in the body while other food groups do not combine at all well. The Western equivalent to the Taoist or Yogic concept of a balanced diet is acid/alkaline, or 'PH.' It is common knowledge that if we add some acidic solution to an equal amount of alkaline solution, the resulting solution is neutral.

But we can combine food groups correctly in order to minimise and negate the damage caused to the body, due to some basic dietary misunderstandings.

When you impair the digestive system by improperly combining foods, it is only the bacteria in your stomach that benefit. They get all the nutrients and you get all of the toxic by-products. This can cause bloating, constipation, colitis, gas, heartburn, cramps, so called 'allergies' and more serious diseases. However, if foods are correctly combined, then regardless of how many calories or how much cholesterol they contain they will not make you fat or slow down your metabolism, especially if at least half your daily food intake is raw. If you follow the above rules for a few months your body will provide you with all the evidence you need. Using your imagination it is easy to construct compatible, digestible and delicious meals. In this way, everything you consume should assist in alkalising the body, purifying the bloodstream, and detoxifying the tissues.

**Carbohydrates** combine well with non-acid fruits (apple, pear, etc), and fresh raw or lightly cooked vegetables. It is best to separate your protein and carbohydrate meals by 10-12 hours. If you eat carbohydrates for breakfast and proteins for dinner, then you can construct a very healthy meal composed of fresh raw fruits.

**Proteins and vegetable proteins** combine well with non-carbohydrate vegetables such as greens, lettuce, and cabbage. It is best to consume vegetables raw as a salad.

**Fats** can be eaten in combination with carbohydrates, vegetables and fruits. With light proteins such as bean curd (tofu) fat combines more favourably. Avoid hydrogenated oils at all costs.

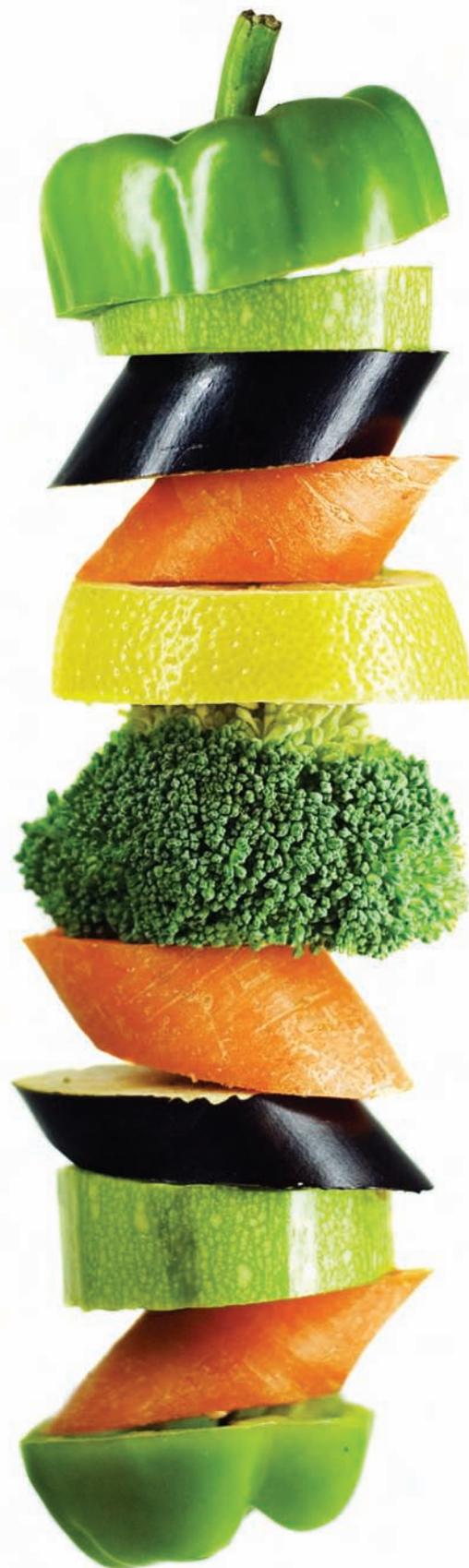
**Salad** should be eaten in large quantities every day. Owing to their active enzymes, salads will help to digest your protein and carbohydrate meal. Freshly prepared salads are also excellent sources of amino acids, vitamins and minerals. With dressings, try to stick to olive oil and lemons.

**Raw Juice** retains all of the most active enzymes from the vegetables, and can be made from any combination of the following: carrots, beetroot, broccoli, apples, celery, parsley, parsnips, wheat-grass juice.

**Vegetables** may be prepared as a broth of boiled vegetables, fresh-cut vegetables cooked by steaming, stewing, or stir-frying, or as freshly extracted raw vegetable juice. For seasoning, spices such as ginger, cumin, fennel, pepper, and turmeric help increase metabolism.

**Fruits** when eaten alone and in sufficient quantities contain all the enzymes, vitamins and amino acids that any body needs for optimum health and vitality. You should eat sweet fruits and acid fruits at separate times. The best choices for fruits are semi-sweet fruits from temperate climates such as apples, pears, watermelons, black cherries, and black grapes. Tropical fruits, such as mangos, pineapples, bananas, have a very high sugar content and tend to overheat the system. The exception is papaya.

**Water** is essential. Drink 2-3 litres per day of pure, preferably alkaline water to flush away the large amounts of acids and other toxic wastes that the detox process empties from the body. Sipping hot water with lemon is a good idea, sage tea is excellent too.



# Beyond the detox

There's more to an effective detox than just eating, says **Chris James**, founder of the Urban Detox Diet plan

For most people, following a detox programme will be perhaps the most powerfully purifying endeavour of their life and a truly life changing experience. On a physical level, when the blood and tissues of the body have been purged of poisons, degeneration is arrested, germs cannot attack, and the body's natural healing mechanisms repair the damage and restore optimal health to the whole system. The effects on other levels of our being are even more profound. Our mental faculties generally improve greatly. Emotionally we are able to let go of a huge amount of baggage as we let go of its physical counterpart. Our energetic and pranic levels change and we encourage and attract greater positivity into our lives.

## Exercise

During detox, asana and pranayama can aid the body in the detoxification process by encouraging lymph drainage and increasing blood flow, thus facilitating the elimination of metabolic toxins through the excretory pathways of the body like the liver, kidney, skin and lungs. Practice in conjunction with slow, deep, rhythmic breathing that fully engages the diaphragm. The combination of slow stretching and loosening drives blood and lymph through the body like a strong pump.

Try a combination of twists, backbends, and supported shoulder stands, which help to drain lymph from the legs. Twists increase peristalsis and clear stagnation, while Ardha Matsyendrasana increases agni (digestive fire) and helps to send blood through the liver. Follow your asana practice with energising pranayama practices like bhastrika and Kapalabhati. Deep diaphragmatic breathing saturates the bloodstream with fresh supplies of oxygen, while purging it of carbon dioxide, thus accelerating the detox process.

## Massage

The deep pressure of massage stimulates various vital points along the nadis and dislodges toxic deposits in the tissues. The massaging action scatters the released toxins and facilitates their drainage through the blood and lymph. Always drink at least one or two large glasses of pure alkaline water immediately following a therapeutic massage.

## Meditation

Meditation helps to bring a balance of mind, body and spirit that aids the process of detoxification. True detoxification is multifaceted – it means not just isolating the body but also taking your mental and emotional state into account.

## Supplements

Psyllium Seed or Psyllium husk is by far the most effective way of dredging the bowels of impacted faeces, mucoid plaque and putrefied food residues that have festered there for years. The Psyllium sweeps like a broom through the entire digestive tract and speeds up the entire detox process. One or two doses a day on an empty stomach is sufficient.

## Lactobacteria

These are the so-called “friendly” flora of the bowels. Psyllium does the job of dredging, and acidophilus bifidus does the job of reintroducing beneficial lactobacteria back into the intestines.

## Body brushing & steaming

Skin is the largest organ in the human body. Skin brushing assists the lymph system to cleanse itself of the toxins that collect below the skin. Use a natural fibre brush with a long handle – remember to skin brush towards the heart. The steam and heat help to promote the excretion of toxins through the skin. If you do not have access to a steam room, take a hot bath, add some of your favourite essential oil or some mineral salts, lie back and relax.

