

Detox the Body, Renew the Skin

Eliminating Toxins Can Clear Complexions

Barbara Hey

Toxins produced from stress, poor diet, fatigue, the environment, and less-than-optimum health can result in a dry, lackluster, acne-ridden, or hypersensitive complexion. If you're having difficulty stabilizing your skin, no matter how diligent the efforts to hydrate and renew, it may be time to consider another tactic: internal cleansing.

The term itself may suggest colonics or scrubbing bubbles for the digestive tract, but really it's simply a rest period for the body, a time devoted to detoxification by eschewing the bad stuff (sugar, chips, coffee, and cocktails, for instance) and consuming wholesome, clean, unprocessed foods. The aim is to give

one's internal environment," says Susan Ciminelli, founder of Susan Ciminelli Day Spa in New York City. The skin, she says, reflects "how one digests, assimilates, and eliminates food."

Hale Sofia Schatz, author of "If the Buddha Came to Dinner: How to Nourish Your Body to Awaken Your Spirit" (Hyperion, 2004), agrees. The reasons for undertaking a cleanse are twofold: "to allow the body to eliminate toxins and to increase the body's natural ability to renew itself through the rejuvenation of cellular growth," Schatz says. She recommends a cleanse that focuses on proper food combinations, predominantly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts.

a mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions

-O.W. Holmes



Eating healthy, organic, whole foods is part of a skin-cleansing detoxification process.

the body time to rid itself of the detritus of a life fueled by caffeine, red meat, and refined foods, and then see and feel what happens. The benefits to body and appearance, say experts, can be dramatic.

Where to Begin?

The epidermis reflects what's going on in the body. "The skin is a mirror of

The detoxing process takes time. A few days is a good start, but a week or even a month is better. When the process is complete, the body is renewed and, Schatz says, "the skin all of a sudden starts looking more luminous, more radiant." But be forewarned: It often gets worse before it gets better.

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"As the toxins get eliminated from the body, you see them most readily on the skin surface. Impurities in the body can come out as blemishes, eczema, or rashes," she says. And that worse-before-better phase can cause distress. "Clients will call me after the first days of a cleanse and say they've had a breakout, and I say, 'That's a healthy sign. The impurities want to get out.'" At this stage, patience is required, because whatever manifests will dissipate with time. Schatz's advice: "Listen to the body, work with the body."

Detox Basics

Following are some general detox fundamentals. As you go through the process, work with your esthetician for guidance and skin care support.

START SLOW.

With any cleanse, the best advice is to ease into it. "Most of our bodies are pretty toxic," says Schatz, noting that many people are at least somewhat addicted to the toxins of day-to-day life--those lattes to invigorate the afternoon doldrums and sugar, wheat, and dairy, all of which are tasty foods common in the American diet. She suggests starting with a preliminary period--a week or two of gradual dietary shifts--to prepare the body for what's to come. During that time, you wean yourself off caffeine (gradually, to avoid the headache), refined flour products, alcohol, and milk. Then, the cleanse can commence.

UP WATER INTAKE.

Critical during a cleanse, and always important for skin, is to increase the amount of fluids ingested. Schatz suggests doubling what you ordinarily drink, which will help the body eliminate the toxins it's releasing. That means lots of spring water, herbal teas, and fresh vegetable juices.

EAT SEASONALLY.

Make dietary selections appropriate to the weather and include fresh, seasonal food. That is, it's preferable to eat whatever fruits or vegetables are harvested in the particular season. Also, make sure to consume foods in the winter that promote warmth (soups instead of salads) and in summer that are cool (melons rather than baked yams). In all seasons, sea vegetables such as arame, wakame, and nori are

recommended, since they are rich in vitamins and minerals that benefit the liver--the organ at the front line of detoxing the body each day.

SUPPORT YOURSELF.

The particulars of a cleanse vary--what foods to eat and when--but have in common specific supplements to support the body (like a supplement of fiber, green food, or probiotics) or herbs to augment the detoxification of the liver. (Schatz recommends dandelion root, for instance.) Detoxing is also a time to relax, meditate, and rest--essential for the body to be refreshed.

Each step of Schatz's three-phase plan may last from two days to a week or two. Her plan begins with a period of just fruits and vegetables. Next, grains, seeds, and nuts are added, and finally protein (tofu, certain fish, beans).

Detoxing doesn't necessarily mean bland food, either. Schatz's book includes dynamic recipes like Ginger-Leek Miso Soup and Salsa Snapper (www.heartofnourishment.com).

In between cleanses just plain eating well can have concrete results, even in the eye zone. For example, Susan Ciminelli has a homemade under-eye lightener in the form of a soup recipe made with kidney-supporting adzuki beans (www.susanciminelli.com).

Of course, nourishing the body with healthful foods is about more than appearance. It's about maximizing health and bringing a consciousness and respect to the foods we put in our bodies. And then, the realization comes that the effort has brought about a multitude of gifts--more energy, vitality, vibrancy, and, not incidentally, looking better too.



Detoxing is an important time to nourish yourself with relaxation, meditation, and rest.

The Wonders of Water

For Skin Health and More

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Creams, nutritional supplements, treatments, lotions, and potions. We are always looking for the next miracle product to keep skin looking healthy and young. However, there is one essential, inexpensive, and often overlooked nutrient right at your fingertips: water.

Just as a car cannot function without oil, our bodies cannot function without water. After oxygen, H₂O is the most important component of the body, responsible for 65-70 percent of its composition. And of this, 80 percent is dedicated to the skin.

Water is the medium for various enzymatic and chemical reactions in the body. It moves nutrients, hormones, antibodies, and oxygen through the blood and lymphatic systems, and it also helps form the matrix of the skin. Devoid of water, the skin becomes dehydrated, resulting in a dry, dull tone.

It's likely that the moment a person feels thirsty, mild dehydration has already set

in. To keep the complexion looking smooth and blemish-free, drink water upon waking and continue drinking it throughout the day at one- to two-hour intervals. At least six 8-oz. glasses of water should be consumed daily and more if you are exercising, perspiring, and/or in hot weather. Ideally, intake should be between ten and twelve 8-oz. glasses of water a day. One note: Don't increase water intake all at once, as the kidneys and digestive system need time to adjust. Add one 8-oz. glass every day or every second day.

What counts toward your daily water intake? Just the basics: water and herbal tea. Caffeinated beverages and alcoholic drinks are diuretics that can contribute to dehydration, requiring even more hydration after drinking.

Not only is water important for skin health, it can also play a key role in the prevention of disease. Drinking eight glasses of water a day can decrease the risk of colon cancer, bladder cancer, and potentially even breast cancer.



Water helps keep the body at optimum health.

Exercise Myths

Fiction Vs. Fact

Although old fitness fictions like "no pain, no gain" are fading fast, plenty of misconceptions still exist. Following are some of the most common myths, counteracted by the latest research.

FICTION: YOU WILL BURN MORE FAT IF YOU EXERCISE LONGER AT A LOWER INTENSITY.

FACT: The most important focus in exercise and weight control is how many calories are burned during the activity. The faster you walk, step or run, the more calories you use per minute. However, high-intensity exercise may be more difficult to sustain.

FICTION: IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WORK OUT HARD AND OFTEN, EXERCISE IS A WASTE OF TIME.

FACT: Any exercise is better than none. For example, regular walking or gardening for as little as an hour a week has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease.

FICTION: IF YOU EXERCISE LONG AND HARD ENOUGH, YOU WILL ALWAYS GET THE RESULTS YOU WANT.

FACT: In reality, genetics plays an important role in how people respond to exercise. Your development of strength, speed, and endurance may be very different from that of other people you know.

FICTION: THE HEALTH AND FITNESS BENEFITS OF MIND-BODY EXERCISE LIKE T'AI CHI AND YOGA ARE QUESTIONABLE.

FACT: The benefits abound! T'ai Chi,

for example, has been shown to help treat low-back pain and fibromyalgia. Improved flexibility, strength, and stress management are just some of the benefits.

FICTION: HOME WORKOUTS ARE FINE, BUT GOING TO A GYM IS THE BEST WAY TO GET FIT.

FACT: Some people find it easier to stick to a home-based fitness program. In spite of all the hype on trendy exercise programs and facilities, the best program for you is the one you will participate in consistently.

This information was provided by IDEA, www.idealife.com.

*Holding onto
anger is like
grasping a hot
coal with intent
of throwing it at
someone else;
you're the one
who gets burned.*
-Buddha

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