

**T**hese exclusive Zest detox plans have been created by nutritionist and yoga teacher, Charlotte Watts, who is a passionate advocate of detoxing at the start of the year. 'I find clearing my body of those nasty toxins that have crept in over the last 12 months really puts me back on track, gets me out of bad habits and leaves me feeling balanced and more in control,' she says.

Whatever your detox desire, Charlotte has drawn on her extensive experience to create the perfect plan for you. Each of these three detoxes have been designed to give your body the help it needs to achieve your goal, while still allowing you to enjoy good food.

And so it's not all too much of a shock to the system, Charlotte has also created a weekend plan to ease yourself into detox mode. 'Rather than going from toxic overload during the party season to 'holier than thou' in one fell swoop, by starting slowly, you'll benefit from more dramatic, long-lasting results.'

## The WEEKEND DETOX PLAN

**H**ow many times have you tried to detox, but given up after just a couple of days because you've got a blinding headache or feel starving? To keep you motivated – and to minimise the side effects of detoxing – we've devised this gentle, two-day mini-detox. You'll be eating differently, and less than normal, but still enough to keep the headaches, mood swings and hunger pangs at bay. Starting a detox over the weekend also means the worst withdrawal symptoms will occur while you're in the comfort of your own home.

Try this detox anytime you feel in need of a quick boost or as a way to make a gradual transition into any of our customised week-long plans. Feel free to eat unlimited vegetables, but remember this isn't a strict raw-food regime – it's important to include sources of meat and fish, plus complex carbohydrates to promote gentle detoxification, while keeping your metabolism firing during the cold winter months.

### FRIDAY

#### Dinner

Stir fry pak choi, green beans, broccoli, ginger, garlic, tamari, soy sauce and Chinese five spice. Add ½ a handful of cashews for protein and fresh coriander to serve.

### 5 weekend snacks

You may need a small snack to even out your blood sugar levels. Try these instead of sugary cakes and sweets.

- Half an avocado and four oatcakes
- Fruit
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Carrot sticks

### SATURDAY

#### Breakfast

Bircher muesli (make on Friday night). Serves 4

40g rolled oats (use buckwheat flakes if you're gluten intolerant)  
1dsp of golden linseeds  
50ml apple juice  
¼ apple, grated  
30ml natural yogurt (optional)  
½tsp cinnamon  
Handful of blackberries or other berries (frozen are OK)

- 1 Put the oats, linseeds and apple juice in a bowl and mix well, cover and refrigerate overnight.
- 2 To serve, mix in the grated apple, yogurt and cinnamon and then top with the berries.

#### Lunch

Poached or baked salmon fillet or a portion of nut roast. Salad including beetroot, ½ an avocado, watercress and onion.

#### Dinner

Lentil and vegetable broth with pumpkin seeds. Simply fry an onion, then add water, lentils and veg of your choice (including some green veg). Simmer until the lentils and vegetables are soft. Season and serve.

### SUNDAY

#### Breakfast

Bircher muesli (see recipe, left) or smoked salmon, spinach and ½ an avocado on 1 large or 2 small pieces of rye toast.

#### Lunch

Baked chicken or turkey breast, or 1 portion of good-quality nut roast, plus plenty of steamed green veg, carrots and a small baked sweet potato.

#### Dinner

Simple miso soup – boil some crushed garlic, ginger, spring onions and green veg. Then add miso paste and tofu cubes, or some cooked chicken at the end.

### Weekend drinks

● If you drink a lot of caffeine, cutting down gradually is kinder on your body than going cold turkey. So, if you currently drink more than two cups of tea, coffee or cola a day, cut down to no more than two over the weekend and only drink with food and before 2pm. Caffeine is addictive, so your body needs time to take back the reins – which means you might feel tired and moody for a few days, but reducing it gradually will ease these symptoms.

● Keep well hydrated. If you've been drinking less than one litre of water or herbal tea a day, start by upping your intake to two litres. Try drinking up to three glasses a day of a mix of apple juice (fresh, not concentrate) and water to help your cells absorb fluids. Nettle tea and detox-specific products such as Pukka Detox Tea, £2.09, will help your liver and kidneys eliminate toxins – aim for two to three cups a day.

**A**dd these healthy habits to your daily routine (you can include them in your weekly detox plans, too). They all help bring down your stress levels, optimising your body's ability to heal and recover.

### What to avoid

- All refined carbohydrates and added sugars – this means cakes, biscuits, pastries, chocolate, sweets, tomato sauce, cereals with added sugar, fizzy and sugary drinks.
- Foods with unhealthy fats such as crisps, chips, mayonnaise and creamy dressings, fried foods (apart from stir-fries with olive oil), red meat and cheese.
- Dairy products such as milk, cheese, cream and fromage frais. Live yogurt is OK. Even if you're not intolerant, just having a rest from dairy can help detoxification as it can be hard to digest. Alternative calcium-rich foods include green veggies, beans, soy nuts, sesame seeds and salmon.

### Sleep off your stress

Be in bed by 11pm at the very latest – early nights are a crucial part of stress and body recovery, so allow time for the essential healing that happens while you sleep. Getting plenty of quality sleep also helps if you're trying to lose weight, as it evens out your appetite and helps reduce sugar and caffeine cravings.

### Have a brush up

Every morning, make time for body brushing – buy a good-quality body brush with firm bristles and, before your bath or shower, brush your entire body in large sweeping movements towards your heart. Start with the soles of your feet and work upwards and inwards, as firmly as you can handle. Brushing your skin makes it easier for your whole body to shed waste and boosts circulation.

### Top tip

When snacking, aim for two portions of fruit a day – a portion is one large piece of fruit or a palmful of smaller fruits. Stick to low-GI fruits, such as berries, apples, plums, pears and peaches.

### Top tip

While you're sleeping, toxins from your body build up on the surface of your tongue. Stop these toxins from re-entering your system by using a specially designed tongue scraper – available at healthfood stores – or an upside-down spoon. While it sounds a bit gross, it's a simple way to rid your body of toxins. It'll help your breath, too!



### Top tip

Always make time for a healthy breakfast. Breakfast kick-starts your metabolism for the rest of the day and helps fight off those blood sugar lows that lead to 4pm sugar cravings.

a cushion under the back of your pelvis, not your waist. Aim to keep your bottom close to the wall. Hold your arms away from your body, palms up and breathe calmly through your nose for ten minutes. Positioning your legs above your head improves circulation to your upper body and brain, which can be very calming. Nasal breathing is more effective at oxygenating your body than mouth breathing and it also tells your nervous system to relax.

### What to buy

Milk thistle is a herb that supports liver function through its active ingredient silymarin. It's a good idea to take a supplement such as Nature's Plus Liv R Actin, £14.49 from www.nutricentre.com, during any detox to move toxic bi-products effectively through your body. →

### Give yourself an energy boost

Revitalise yourself by lying on the floor with your legs straight up a wall, feet together with