

Week-long plans

While our weekend detox will help minimise the worst detox side effects, you may still experience symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, irritability, nausea, bloating, flatulence or skin break-outs. These should pass in a couple of days. Just remember, you're only seven days away from a new you!

The rules for all week-long plans

- Avoid fruit juices (except those specifically recommended).
- Cut out caffeine completely.
- Drink two litres of water a day.
- Start the day with the juice of half a lemon in a small mug of hot water.

The 7-DAY WEIGHT-LOSS DETOX

When you're finding it hard to shift those extra pounds or you just sluggish and heavy, this plan could help you lose 2lb and regain a feeling of lightness. This may not sound like a lot, but shedding weight any quicker means you're losing only fluids and you'll put it all back on when you stop detoxing.

The key to success is not to skip meals. Your metabolism needs constant reminders to keep those fat-burning fires stoked. The following diet plan also encourages a balanced blood-sugar level to stabilise the 'highs and lows' that often follow the festive rollercoaster of alcohol and chocolate treats. Excess sugar also turns to fat and makes the liver sluggish.

BREAKFASTS

- 280ml smoothie made from soaked oats, ground almonds, ½ an avocado and berries, plus 100ml water and 100ml apple juice.
- 4 oatcakes or rye crackers, or 1 large or 2 small pieces of rye bread with spreads that are low in sugar and high in protein. For example, 2tsp tahini (sesame seed), nut or pumpkinseed butter, 1dsp of cottage cheese or 25g goat's cheese. Also try avocado, watercress, spinach, tomatoes or cucumber as an accompaniment.

LUNCHES

- Smoked mackerel (1 whole piece), with green salad and/or grated raw beetroot, carrot and courgette, and a small baked sweet potato.
- Medium bowl of aduki and mung-bean stew. Simmer beans with some carrot, fennel, celery and parsley in water until they are soft. Serve with a little crumbled goat's cheese and fresh coriander.

DINNERS

- Salmon fillet, baked in foil with garlic and lemon juice, served with a simple asparagus, broccoli and green bean stir-fry plus garlic, ginger and tamari – served with fresh parsley.
- Turkey with roasted vegetables (see recipe below). Turkey is a good choice when trying to keep down the fat content of your diet, as it's one of the leanest meats. For a vegetarian option, roast the vegetables as below and add chestnuts and/or feta cheese on top, 5 minutes before the end of the cooking time. This recipe serves 4.

- 4 skinless turkey breast fillets, about 115g each
- 1 red chilli, deseeded
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 onion, cut into wedges
- 1 courgette, weighing about 175g, cut into chunks
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into thick strips
- 1 yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into thick wedges
- 1tbsp to 2tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 225g vine-ripened cherry or small plum tomatoes
- 1tbsp fresh basil, shredded
- 280g freshly cooked tagliatelle, to serve

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5. Lightly rinse the turkey breast fillets and pat dry. Finely chop the chilli, crush 2 of the garlic cloves, mix together, then rub over the turkey. Place on a plate, cover loosely with baking paper and leave in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- 2 Cut the remaining garlic cloves in half, place in a roasting tin with the remaining prepared vegetables (except for the tomatoes) and drizzle over 1tbsp of the oil. Season with pepper.
- 3 Roast for 15 minutes, turning the vegetables occasionally. Place the turkey steaks on top and continue to roast for 15 minutes, then add the tomatoes and roast for a further 10 minutes, or until the turkey is thoroughly cooked. Sprinkle with the shredded basil and serve with the freshly cooked tagliatelle.

5 weight-loss superfoods

These all cleanse your system to help reduce the toxins that upset blood-sugar balance; encourage fluid balance to reduce water retention; and boost your metabolism to promote fat-burning potential.

- Parsley ● Asparagus ● Cucumber
- Grapefruit ● Onion

Weight-loss drinks

- Hot water with lemon and ½tsp of cinnamon, which helps balance blood sugar.
- Weight-loss herbal tea. Birt And Tang Figuro Tea, £1.99, contains pu'er tea, which is popular in China as a slimming aid.
- Weight-loss juice mix. Mix together ½ pint each of apple, cucumber and celery juice with parsley and ginger, and drink daily. These ingredients all support your metabolism and clean out toxins to help reduce fluid retention.



'A brisk walk before breakfast will kick-start your metabolism before you've started consuming calories'

How to get moving

- Take a daily brisk walk – it should last long enough to raise your heartbeat for 20 minutes and include some uphill walking to boost your metabolism and increase your body's capacity for burning stored fat. This can be particularly effective if you do it before you eat breakfast – it'll help kick-start your metabolism before you've even started consuming any calories for the day.
- A quick, metabolism-boosting workout to do at home is walking up and down the stairs, building up to ten to 15 minutes a day. This can be done in three-minute chunks to start with.

Your treat

A good massage can get your circulation moving and encourage blood into areas where toxins have become stubborn and sluggish, especially in trouble spots like hips, thighs and buttocks. For a home alternative, rub the length of the outside of your thighs and arms, buttocks and abdomen vigorously with almond oil. You can add juniper and cypress essential oils for some extra detoxification, as they're great for helping reduce cellulite.

- If you're generally fit, try jumping jacks on the spot for a minute at a time, with one-minute breaks, for ten to 15 minutes. Jump fully off the floor while raising your arms and legs up and out to the sides, bringing them back in as you land.
- Don't underestimate the power of incidental exercise. Use the stairs instead of the lift, walk to the corner store, get off the bus a few stops early and take to the hoovering with extra gusto – every little helps!

What to buy

Support your body's fat-burning potential with tamarind extract from Higher Nature HCA (hydroxycitric acid), £12.40 from www.nutricentre.com. It will help control your appetite and regulate your metabolism. See the pack for instructions on how to take it. →