

# Wellness Advocate

## “Detoxing” Is a Journey



The subject of detox is often touted as a potential solution to health, weight and energy challenges. Removing poisons quickly from your body is a tempting idea, but like the word “natural,” the term detox is very overused.

Detoxification is an established medical treatment for helping drug addicts and alcoholics through withdrawal. A medical detox can also reduce a buildup of heavy metals, like iron or mercury, or help to treat certain genetic diseases.

But when it comes to actual health benefits, there is no real scientific basis for detoxing. Christine Gerbstadt, MD, author of *Doctor’s Detox Diet* (Nutronics Publishing, 2012) works to salvage and redefine the term. Her book emphasizes healthy eating, with a focus on avoiding processed foods, harnessing the power of certain spices and setting up your kitchen so it’s easy to cook delicious, wholesome meals. Dr. Gerbstadt looks at “detoxing” as a lifelong process, not a quick fix.

The topic of how to safely remove toxins from your body or how to increase your body's ability to break down and eliminate toxins is a lengthy subject and new research and information is constantly coming forward. With all this in mind, here are some simple tips for approaching detoxification sensibly.

 **Avoid extremes.** Instead of following the latest celebrity detox that you've read about, educate yourself about the least toxic choices when it comes to buying personal care items, food, cleaning products, etc. Make these changes gradually and see what fits within your budget. Increasing water intake alone can have profound positive effects.

 **Have a ‘detox focus’ periodically.** It can be a good idea to have times when you give special attention and acknowledgement to your body's detoxification mechanics. We all get a little off-track occasionally and sometimes we need a plan laid out before us to get started again. Some may choose a week or two to purposely avoid alcohol, refined sugar and red meat, while emphasizing a more plant-based diet

 **Make sure your nutrient intake is optimal.** Virtually all vitamins and minerals are involved in the daily detoxification process our bodies naturally perform. That's one of the reasons you'll want to ensure that you are getting essential nutrients, especially the vitamins C, E, and B as well as zinc, magnesium, and selenium.

 **Seek professional advice.** If you have a medical condition that you believe would warrant a medically supervised detoxification protocol, please do not attempt to do it on your own. You could waste your time and money, and most importantly, put your health in jeopardy. Find a healthcare practitioner who is current on detoxification research, testing and protocols. Be wary of a practitioner who throws a bunch of supplements at you without giving you the reasons, as well as one who doesn't think you need vitamins at all.

 **Take it slow.** For some, the idea of detoxification may be new and feel overwhelming. If you push yourself too fast and hard to make changes, stress hormones could literally add to the toxic load your body has to process.

Taking this common-sense approach certainly doesn't seem as glamorous or intriguing as the latest “lose 15 pounds in 15 days” celebrity detox. But the payoff is much better. Healthy eating and reducing your toxic exposure over time can result in increased health and vitality, better moods, and sharper mental focus.

### Easy Ways To Detox

- ▶ Drink more water.
- ▶ Exercise vigorously.
- ▶ Eat fewer animal foods.
- ▶ Don’t smoke.
- ▶ Limit alcoholic beverages.
- ▶ Avoid processed foods.

QUICK TAKES

# Discover Your Inner Athlete!

Being athletic is a state of mind and it doesn't matter whether you're training for the Olympics or just want to be able to walk a mile or two without getting winded. It's about challenging yourself, setting goals and practicing life-long fitness habits. Kathleen Trotter is a fitness trainer in Toronto and blogs for the Huffington Post about health and wellness. She notes: "My clients who have achieved long-term lifestyle changes have all, in one way or another, found their inner athlete." This doesn't have to mean training for 20 hours per week or pushing your body to its absolute limits. The aim is having the mindset of a great athlete: goal setting, fueling your body for peak performance and really loving the physical activities you participate in. Here are our top tips for finding your inner athlete:

## Focus on physical, performance-based goals, not just the way you look.

Your goal here is to look better, but more importantly, it's to feel better. The benefits of exercise extend far beyond weight loss and include improved sleep, energy, mood and long-term health.

**Eat to fuel.** Don't think of food as the enemy. Think of food as fuel. Fill up on foods that will pack a nutritional punch. Think chicken, vegetables, whole grains and nuts; eat a healthy breakfast every day.

**Take an off-season.** Serious amateurs and professional athletes take time off to recharge physically and emotionally. But that's not an excuse to sit on the sofa all day and become lazy! Take a couple of weeks every few months and substitute structured workouts for walking, swimming, biking or kayaking—stay active, but take it a little easier and have fun!



## Recipe: Lightened-Up Shepherd's Pie

This super-healthy and delicious recipe substitutes vegetarian ground beef (brands include Yves and LightLife, among others). In general, you'll get less fat and calories and more fiber in "veggie ground" than in its beef counterparts. The downside is it's higher in sodium — although still in a moderate range — and lower in protein. When you eat vegetarian ground beef, you typically get three times less total fat and seven times less saturated fat than when you eat ground beef, according to the American Dietetic Association. You'll be surprised how little difference there is in the taste and texture from ground beef when it's nicely seasoned!

### Ingredients

2 pounds potatoes, such as russet, peeled and cubed  
2 tablespoons sour cream or softened cream cheese  
1 large egg yolk  
1/2 cup vegetable broth  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
2 12 oz. packages vegetarian ground beef  
1 carrot, peeled and chopped  
1 onion, chopped  
2 tablespoons butter  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 cup beef stock or broth  
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce  
1/2 cup frozen peas  
1 teaspoon sweet paprika  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves

### Directions

Boil potatoes in salted water until tender, about 12 minutes. Drain potatoes and pour them into a bowl. Combine sour cream, egg yolk and vegetable broth. Add the mixture into potatoes and mash until potatoes are almost smooth.

While potatoes boil, preheat a large skillet over medium high heat. Add oil to hot pan with veggie ground. Season it with salt and pepper. Brown and crumble for 3 or 4 minutes. Add chopped carrot and onion to the mixture. Cook another 5 minutes, stirring frequently. In a second small skillet over medium heat cook butter and flour together 2 minutes. Whisk in broth and Worcestershire sauce. Thicken gravy 1 minute. Add gravy to meat and vegetables. Stir in peas.

Preheat broiler to high. Fill a small rectangular casserole with meat and vegetable mixture. Spoon potatoes over meat evenly. Top potatoes with paprika and broil 6 to 8 inches from the heat until potatoes are evenly browned. Top casserole dish with chopped parsley and serve.

### Nutritional Information per serving (Makes 8 servings)

260 calories | calories from fat: 44 | 4 g protein | 35 g carbohydrates | 6 g fiber  
4 g fat | 342 mg sodium | 4.6 g sugar