**TIPS FOR LUXURY DETOX**

**1. Apples and pears**

It all goes begins with apples and pears. Not eating them (although that would be a good start) but which one you are. Your waist to hip ratio (WHR) will put you either in the "apple-shaped" category with more weight around the waist or "pear-shaped" bodies who carry more weight around the hips.

Which one are you? Use a measuring tape to measure the circumference of your hips at the widest part. Then measure your waist at the smaller circumference of your natural waist, usually just above the belly button. To determine the ratio, divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement.

A WHR of around 0.8 is ideal for women; 0.7 and you are the unattainable Liz Hurley league. For blokes, a WHR score of 0.9 is associated with being healthy.  For women, a waist measurement of 80 to 88cm (31.5 to 34.6 in) is high and over 88cm is very high. For men, a waist measurement of 94 to 102cm (37 inches to 40 in) is high and above that very high.

So, forget the style experts who trot around on TV, providing wearable solutions for each.  Being an apple-shape is dangerous. As your clever Doctor will tell you, a large waist measurement indicates the presence of unhealthy internal fat. Time to do something about it.

**2. Eat big and bulky to become small and slim**

When you choose "big" foods like fruits, vegetables, salads and soups, which are bulked up by fibre and water, you're eating a lot of food that fills you up, but not a lot of calories. Minimize "little" foods (lots of calories packed into tiny, unsatisfying portions) include cheeses, sugar-rich snacks, and dry foods like crackers and cookies, (including fat-free varieties). They are small in size but dense with calories and relatively low of nutrients. Many studies show that hunger tends to be satisfied by a certain volume of food - about 4 to 5 pounds daily. And it doesn't matter how many calories are packed into each pound. Once we're full, we stop eating.

**3. Wine o’clock**

Most probably you know wine o’clock. It’s that early evening hour when a glass of wine (or two) marks the transition between family and adult time or just simply takes the edge of the day. I’m sure you’ve also seen the magazine or newspaper articles that tell us that a little alcohol is good for us, I mean, it is made of grapes, right? I’m no killjoy. I love a glass of wine with dinner. However, if you want to lose weight over the next month, alcohol has to go. If that is simply too much to bear then one small glass of wine, one spirit or one small beer, twice a week should be the limit for weight loss. Let me explain.

Drinking alcohol doesn’t just affect your body with the number of empty calories the drinks contain. This is because your body uses more than one source of fuel, thus, if alcohol is consumed then this alcohol ‘energy’ will be used instead of fat.  In a triple whammy on the waistband, the wee dram will also be boost appetite whilst preventing the absorption of many of the essential nutrients needed for successful weight loss.

So, try out these detox drinking rules to beat the wine o’clock waistband.

* No 1. For every drink, have a glass of water.
* No. 2 Drink out of a smaller glass. Simple but effective.
* No. 3 Even better, stock up on some grown-up alcohol alternatives such as fizzy apple juice, elderflower cordial or tonic.  Dressed up with some ice, herbs such as mint and some chopped fruit and they almost taste as good as the real thing. Honest.

**4. Make your own body treatments**

If you have access to a sauna, preferably of the infrared variety, then please try to book yourself in for a session. Sweating is an important elimination route for the body, and a sauna is a great way to flush out large amounts of toxins. To ensure you are comfortable, avoid eating your main meal for two hours before a sauna session and make sure you drink a minimum of 225ml (8fl oz) of water before entering. Follow the sauna’s guidelines on removing jewellery and the length of time permitted, as not all saunas are the same.

**5. Mind detox**

Body detox means little if you are a stress bunny. Wouldn’t life be less stressful if mornings were less manic? Start the day a little calmer by waking up ten minutes earlier. It doesn’t mean you start your morning routine earlier but that you take these precious ten minutes to yourself to gather your thoughts and enjoy a little peace. You are also more likely to eat a healthy breakfast if you are in a calm state of mind.

It doesn’t take a long time to relax when you’re doing deep breathing. An easy technique is alternative nostril breathing such as is used in yoga classes.  Simply, plug one nostril, breathe in slowly as deeply as you can and then cover the other nostril and breathe out. Repeat on each side for a few minutes and you should feel more relaxed within a few minutes.

**6. Sweat it out**

If you have access to a sauna, preferably of the infrared variety, then please try to book yourself in for a session. Sweating is an important elimination route for the body, and a sauna is a great way to flush out large amounts of toxins. To ensure you are comfortable, avoid eating your main meal for two hours before a sauna session and make sure you drink a minimum of 225ml (8fl oz) of water before entering. Follow the sauna’s guidelines on removing jewellery and the length of time permitted, as not all saunas are the same.

**7. Tiffany calling**

One of the techniques I use during detox retreat programmes is to ask people to choose a symbolic piece of jewellery on their hands or wrists (where it is easily visible). Put your piece of jewellery on as a visual reminder to take a five minute ‘time out’ before reaching for the biscuit tin. It is simple, but effective! Don’t feel the need for expensive jewellery – anything will do – although some of our more enterprising ladies have used the technique as an excuse for a visit to Tiffany’s!

**8. Add in some superfoods**

You’ve probably never thought about algae as food but Spirulina and chlorella and very popular superfoods and can be useful on a detox. Don’t worry, there is no need to scrape the bottom of your neighbour’s pond, the health-giving algae come in liquid, powder or tablet form. An excellent source of protein, algae can boost immunity, improve mental performance and are an excellent all-round source of vitamins, minerals and hard-to-get amino acids. Take as directed on the bottle.

**9. Add in detox broth**

This broth is the ultimate detox cocktail. Rich in minerals and vitamins it helps to balance the pH of the body, promoting cleansing of all the body tissues, as well balancing electrolytes. You can vary the taste by adding any spice except salt - cayenne pepper is especially good for a detox. As an alternative to the broth you can have miso soup for your afternoon pick-me-up. Miso, which is made from fermented soya beans, is full of nutrients and the healthy soup can be quickly made from a sachet.

**10. Get creative with vegetables**

If half of your plate is taken up by veggies you’ll never go far wrong. Roast, bake, stir fry – whatever takes your fancy.  Don’t’ forget about salad vegetables either but you’ll need to warm them up to make them appealing. Turn a cool salad into something much more welcoming with toppings such as delicious roasted beetroot and goat’s cheese. Another great way to keep up the nutrients and keep out the stodge is to have a pot of soup on the stove most of the time.

**11. Get fruity**

When it comes to fruits, I suggest baking them.  Frozen berries which make a near-perfect plate mate to banana if they are baked together – steaming, oozy sweet fruits served with a dollop of ice cream or natural yoghurt if you are feeling virtuous.

**12. Wheatgerm**

Hormonally women are certainly more complex and our needs for minerals such as iron and B vitamins ebb and flow with our cycle. In any women’s store cupboard should be wheatgerm, a  health-food basic that is simply the embryo of the wheat kernel.

For those that avoid wheat based products, no need to worry, the kernel contains only the good stuff and is not associated with any of the negative wheat-based problems. Wheatgerm is one of the best sources of folic acid; a nutrient that is not just important for childbearing years but that also reduces a compound in your body called homocysteine. Lower levels of homocysteine have been linked to reducing the risk of heart disease, osteoporosis bone fractures, and dementia. It also contains powerful antioxidants that help prevent free radical damage and ageing.

The good news for those of you with kiddies is that it is pretty much undetectable even by the palates of picky eaters. Indeed, in our house, wheatgerm is welcomed as ‘sprinkles’ – an addition to smoothies, yoghurt or cereal. For a real treat though, fill the house with the scent of freshly made guilt-free biscuits that contain a good serving of wheatgerm. Even better, boys, get your apron on and show us girls what you are made of!

**Oaty wheatgerm biscuits  (one at a time!)**

**Preheat oven to 350°F**

* Combine ¾ cup oil, 1 cup of honey and 2 tablespoons of molasses.
* Add two eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition.
* Add two teaspoons of vanilla essence.
* Combine ¾ cup soya flour, sifted with ½ cup milk powder (skimmed for lower fat), also sifted.
* Add raisins (or dates), walnuts, 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 ½ cups of wheat germ and 2 cups of oatmeal or porridge oats.
* Stir all wet ingredients into dry ingredients and blend well.
* Drop by teaspoons onto lightly oiled baking sheet and bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes.

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