



# DETOX YOUR ENTIRE LIFE, *The Healthy Way*







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# Detox Your Entire Life, *The Healthy Way*

Toxins exist everywhere—from air to food to emotions. While it’s impossible to eliminate ALL exposure to toxins, you can increase your awareness of what you’re potentially being exposed to, and find ways to limit your exposure.

This is a guide to detoxifying your life, not in the remove-all-toxins-everywhere sense, but in the realistic sense of limiting exposure to harmful elements across different domains in your life. In this e-book, you’ll find helpful guidelines, tips, and tricks on how to:

- 1 Detox Your BODY**
- 2 Detox Your ENVIRONMENT**
- 3 Detox Your MIND**

Organized into these three important areas of life, you’ll be sure to cover your bases. People who follow healthy detox steps, like the ones you’ll learn in this guide, often report positive developments in their lives, such as:

- Weight loss
- Reduced cravings
- Decreased inflammation and pain
- Improved energy
- Better sleep

Including these tips as part of your lifestyle and taking steps to reduce the accumulation of toxicity in all areas of your life will move you in the direction of total wellness and increased vitality.

In good health and happiness,  
The Chopra Center





# Detox Your BODY

Everywhere you turn, people are starting a juice cleanse or a detox diet. How many Facebook posts have you read about the latest liver detox, elimination diet, fat flush, or colon cleanse?

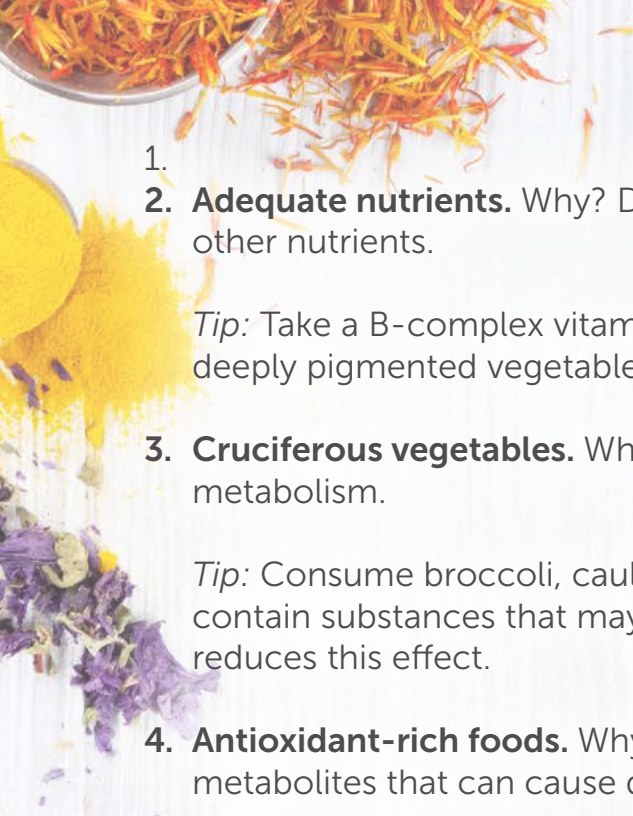
It's great that more people are thinking about cleansing their systems. But it's important to know how to do a proper detox so that your system is actually cleansed of toxins rather than mobilizing toxins from fat storage into your bloodstream, where they can cause significant problems. In other words, it's important to know how to do a detox the healthy way.

So what should you be looking for in an optimal detox plan? Here are the six components that will make your detox revitalizing and healthy.

**1. High-quality protein sources.** Why? Amino acids derived from protein are necessary components for enzymes and the liver detoxification pathway.

*Tip:* Choose vegetarian sources such as beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds—or clean animal sources (e.g. organic poultry, eggs, wild-caught fish). Protein powders such as pea, hemp, and whey may also be helpful.





- 1.
2. **Adequate nutrients.** Why? Detoxification is a complex process that utilizes a number of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.  
*Tip:* Take a B-complex vitamin with methylcobalamin and methylfolate. Eat nutrient-dense foods such as fresh, deeply pigmented vegetables and fruits.
3. **Cruciferous vegetables.** Why? Vegetables in this family help support liver detoxification and estrogen metabolism.  
*Tip:* Consume broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, bok choy, kale, cabbage, and greens. While crucifers contain substances that may interfere with thyroid in people with iodine deficiency, cooking the vegetables reduces this effect.
4. **Antioxidant-rich foods.** Why? During the multistep detoxification process, your body can create some toxic metabolites that can cause damage if they are not buffered by protective nutrients.  
*Tip:* Supplement or include foods rich in vitamin C, magnesium, selenium, and phytonutrients such as those found in garlic, onions, fruits, and vegetables. Artichokes, turmeric, and coriander contain silymarin (the liver-supportive antioxidant found in milk thistle).
5. **Plenty of pure water.** Why? Part of the detoxification process eliminates toxins through urine and sweat, so you want to make sure things are flowing and you avoid dehydration.  
*Tip:* Drink at least six to eight glasses of filtered or spring water daily. Try to avoid storing water in plastic bottles.
6. **Use herbs and spices.** Why? Various herbs and spices possess high levels of antioxidants and may boost the body's defenses against oxidative stress. Try drinking herbal teas rich in cinnamon, ginger, fennel, clove, and mint, and cook your food with generous amounts of basil, rosemary, thyme, oregano, turmeric, sage and parsley.

## Here are the five things you should avoid during your detox:

1. Alcohol, tobacco, recreational drugs, and non-prescribed medications.
2. Caffeine. Since caffeine is also metabolized by the liver, reducing its intake will help support your detox. If you are used to consuming caffeine regularly or in large amounts, taper down gradually to avoid withdrawal symptoms such as headaches. If you resume coffee, choose organic regular (not-decaf) coffee and consume less.
3. Anything artificial. If it didn't exist in nature 100 years ago, don't eat it.
4. Processed, highly refined, and GMO foods. Beware of anything that comes in a package and doesn't resemble the food's original form.
5. Sugar and other sweeteners. Particularly artificial sweeteners are nasty, but even the natural sweeteners can put added stress on our liver due to high-fructose content.







## Eating Organic

Eating organic is one way to help eliminate toxins from your life. But what about the price? We hear so much about the benefits of organic versus conventional food, and yet the price tag is enough to make even the most fervent foodie cringe.

Fortunately, there is a movement evolving quickly touting the support of local and sustainable agriculture. More and more people, especially the younger generations, are beginning to question where their food is coming from and how it is produced. Whether you want to support this movement or simply want to be able to provide a healthy meal for your family, here are some budget-friendly suggestions for incorporating more organic foods into your diet without emptying your wallet.

### **Prioritize Your Choices**


If you bought every single product as organic, your food budget would jump nearly 50 percent. That being said, it is not necessary to purchase everything as organic. Educate yourself on foods that are an absolute must for buying organic so you can pick and choose with confidence. As a general rule, anything that has a thick or tough rind such as melons, oranges, and bananas are OK to purchase conventional, but if you will be eating the skin, lean toward organic to avoid toxins.

### **The Dirty Dozen**

This list of conventionally grown fruits and vegetables has been identified as having the highest levels of pesticide residue. Avoid non-organic:

- Strawberries
- Apples
- Nectarines



- 
- Peaches
  - Celery
  - Grapes
  - Cherries
  - Spinach
  - Tomatoes
  - Sweet Bell Peppers
  - Cherry Tomatoes
  - Cucumbers

### The Clean Fifteen

Conventional fruits and vegetables that have lower pesticide levels are less important to buy organic, if you're on a strict budget and trying to keep your intake of pesticides down.

- Avocados
- Sweet Corn
- Pineapples
- Cabbage
- Sweet Peas
- Onions
- Asparagus
- Mangos
- Papayas
- Kiwi
- Eggplant
- Honeydew Melon
- Grapefruit
- Cantaloupe
- Cauliflower

For more information, visit the Environmental Working Group's website: <https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/index.php>

### Support Local Farms

In response to the demand for local and sustainable food (good for the environment and people and is humane), farmer's markets are a fast-growing niche within the food market along with Community Supported Agriculture or CSA programs. In both cases, you are buying food directly from the farmer. As part of a CSA program, you receive a share of the farmer's harvest by subscribing or paying for a membership. Depending on the size of your family, a CSA box of fruits and vegetables can cost anywhere from \$20 to \$50 and is usually delivered weekly or bi-weekly. This is very reasonable considering the quantity and quality of the food you are receiving. Search online to find your closest farmer's market or CSA program.

### Buy in Bulk

Shopping in the bulk bin section of the grocery store can be quite cost effective. Lentils, herbs, nuts, oats, and flour are just a few of the items that make more sense to buy in bulk, and you have more control over how much you actually need.

### Don't Forget the Freezer Section

Ideally, we would all eat freshly picked fruits and vegetables at the peak of their ripeness. The reality, however, is that not all of us have access to this type of food. Depending on where you live, the better choice can sometimes be found in the frozen section. The advantage of frozen produce is that they are usually picked when ripe, blanched in hot water to kill bacteria and stop food-degrading enzymes, and then flash frozen to preserve nutrients. Stick to whole fruits and vegetables rather than chopped or peeled for the best nutrient retention.

### Grow Your Own Food

This goes without saying, but growing your own garden is one of the key ways to save money while maintaining a healthy, organic lifestyle. In this way, you know exactly what has gone into your food. Even if you have little or no yard, there are money-saving plants you can grow, such as tomatoes and herbs (organic herbs are expensive in the store).



## Move Your Body to Detox

It's not just what you put IN your body, but it's also how you move your body that matters in order to detoxify. Exercising not only burns calories, but it also keeps your muscles strong, gets your heart rate up, and works up a sweat—all important elements of a detox.

Moving your body—whether through walking, running, aerobic exercise, or yoga—encourages your body to breathe, filter, and circulate. When your breath and heart speeds up, your body has a greater opportunity of flushing out unnecessary toxins, which is your goal!

During your detox, make sure to work up a sweat daily. Perspiration is another way for toxins to exit the body. Here are some ways you can work up a sweat:

- Take an aerobics class
- Go for a hike
- Walk around your neighborhood
- Go for a run
- Do some yoga
- Go for a bike ride
- Take a dance class
- Try Pilates
- Use a sauna

Practicing yoga will certainly assist you in the detoxification process. Whether you're moving into advanced poses or you are a very beginner—watch the benefits happen naturally.



Try this simple yoga sequence to enhance your detox program:

### 1. *Surya Namaskar* (Sun Salutations)

The Sun Salutation is actually more than one pose—it's a series of 12 poses for you to flow through. This sequence is a great way to tap into your internal fire and warm up your muscles for the poses that follow.



1. Hands to Heart Pose  
*(take a few deep breaths)*



2. Hands to Sky Pose  
*(inhale)*



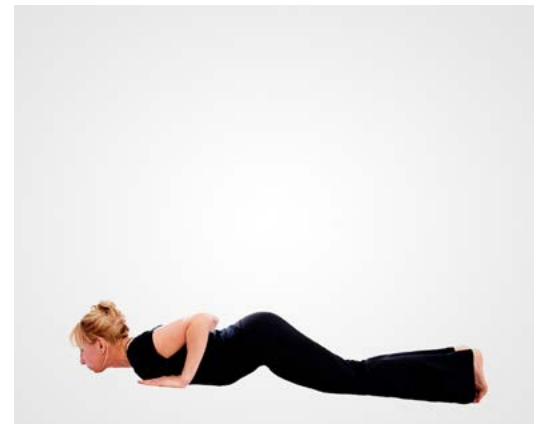
3. Hands to Feet Pose  
*(exhale)*



4. Equestrian Pose with Left Leg Back  
*(inhale)*



5. Mountain Pose  
*(exhale)*



6. Eight Limbs Pose  
*(inhale/exhale)*



7. Cobra Pose  
*(inhale)*



8. Mountain Pose  
*(exhale)*



9. Equestrian Pose with Right Leg Back  
*(inhale)*



10. Hands to Feet Pose  
*(exhale)*



11. Hands to Sky Pose  
*(inhale)*



12. Hands to Heart Pose  
*(exhale)*



## 2. *Parivrtta Utkatasana* (Revolved Chair Pose)

Bring your feet either hip-width apart or together (depending on your comfort level). Bend your knees as if you are sitting on a chair; make sure your knees are aligned with the center of your feet. Bring your hands together at the heart center and bring one elbow to the opposite knee, pressing your palms firmly together. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and open your chest wide.

**Detox benefits:** In addition to improving the health of the spine and vertebrae, this asana stimulates the liver, spleen, and digestive system, while toning the abdominals and improving the elimination process.

## 3. *Garuda-asana* (Eagle Pose)

Stand with your feet together and arms by your side, which is *Tadasana* or mountain pose. Draw your left foot upward, bending the knee as you lift it. Wrap the left foot around your right leg as you rest the back of your left thigh on the right thigh. Cross your arms at the elbows, left over right. Join the palms of your hands together keeping the fingers pointed upward. Inhale and hold the posture for the duration of the inhaled breath.

Exhale and return to the *Tadasana* pose. Repeat the posture on the opposite side, wrapping the right leg over the left and the right arm over left.

**Detox benefits:** In addition to stretching the ankles and calves, this asana stretches the thighs, hips, shoulders, and upper back. By firmly pressing the thighs together, deeper circulation is supported in the legs, which helps flush out the blood and lymph system.



Revolved Chair Pose



Eagle Pose

## 4. *Parivrtta Anjaneyasana* (Revolved Lunge Pose)

From Downward-Facing Dog, step your left foot forward between your hands and come down to your back knee. Inhale and lift your arms to the sky and upright your torso. Exhale and bring your hands to prayer. Take a big inhale here. As you exhale, twist to the left. Press your right elbow to the outside of your left knee, keeping your hands at heart center. To deepen the pose, you can tuck your back toe under and lift off of your back knee. To take it even further, extend both arms, reaching your left fingertips to the sky and your right fingertips to the mat. You can also place your right hand on a block. Hold for 10 to 15 breaths and repeat on other side.

**Detox benefits:** Adding a twist to the traditional lunge pose helps target your abdomen and improve digestion.

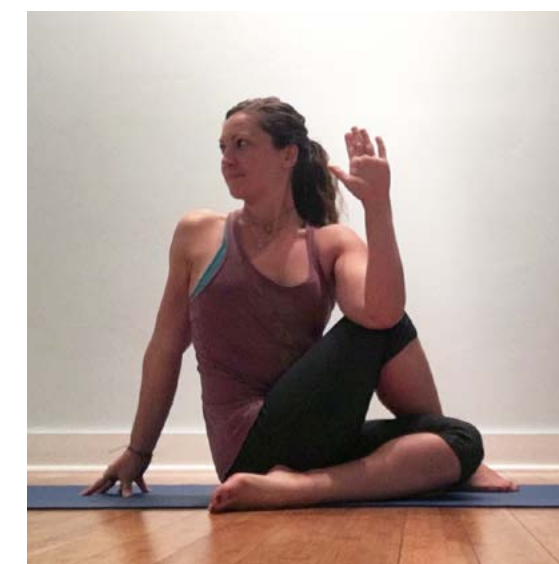
## 5. *Ardha Matsyendrasana* (Half Lord of the Fishes Pose)

Start by sitting on the floor with both legs in front of you. Bend your knees and keep your feet flat on the floor. Slide your left foot under your right leg so that it touches your right glute. Your left knee should be resting gently on the floor. Step your right foot over your left leg so that the sole of your foot rests flat on the floor; the outside of your right foot should be touching the outside of your left knee. Exhale and twist gently toward the right. Press your right hand on the floor behind your back and rest your left forearm or elbow over your right thigh. Continue to deepen the twist with every exhale. Hold for 5 to 10 breaths and repeat on other side.

**Detox benefits:** This twist helps to aid digestion and remove the impurities from the body. As the abdominal organs are squeezed, the organs within the core cavity are gently massaged and the kidney and liver are stimulated. When the twist is released, fresh blood enters the organs.



Revolved Lunge Pose



Half Lord of the Fishes Pose



## 6. Urdhva Dhanurasana (Full Wheel)

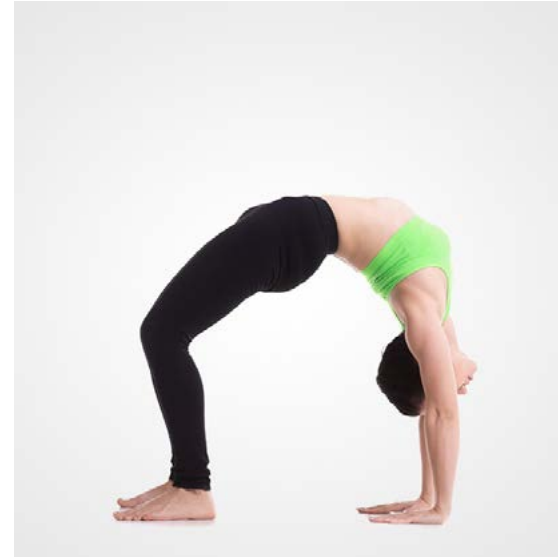
Move into a reclined position on your back, knees over ankles and toes pointed forward. Place your palms to frame your head and slowly press up, gently placing the crown of your head on the mat. Then slowly press up into a backbend, opening through your chest and shoulders.

**Detox benefits:** Chest-opening exercises are wonderful to release stagnation and congestion in the body. They are also a great way to activate your metabolism.

## 7. Sarvangasana (Shoulder Stand Pose)

Start by lying on the floor. Draw your legs back over the head coming into a plow pose. Bring your hands to either side of the spine, palms facing down and slowly bend both your knees and press your feet up into the air, supporting your lower back with your hands. Lift the kneecaps and draw the belly toward the spine. Gaze towards your toes and avoid moving your head to either side. Hold for 10 slow, deep breaths. Lower down slowly to return to your first position.

**Detox benefits:** Inverted poses such as the shoulder stand help drain accumulated lymph fluid from the legs and upper body. This is a wonderful pose to do at the end of a practice as all toxins that were released during the practice are then flushed toward the heart to be oxygenated and cleansed.



Full Wheel Pose



Shoulder Stand Pose

"The true purpose of yoga  
is to discover that aspect of your being  
that can never be lost."

*-Deepak Chopra*



## Incorporate Self-Massage

Performing a self-massage (*Abhy*) will do wonders to assist in your detoxification process. When stimulated through therapeutic touch or massage, the skin releases a pharmacy of healing chemicals that have health-promoting effects on the physiology. In addition to feeling good, regular massage and loving touch detoxifies the body's tissues, increases circulation, calms the mind, and enhances immune function.

Follow these steps to perform a self-massage:

Warm ¼ cup of oil:

- Sesame and almond oil for Vatas
- Coconut or sunflower oil for Pittas
- Safflower oil for Kaphas

Make sure to test the temperature before you begin the massage so it is not too hot.

- 1. Head:** Begin at the crown of your head and apply a bit of oil, working slowly out in circular motions. If time allows, spend at least a couple of minutes on the scalp.
- 2. Face:** Massage your forehead, temples, cheeks, and jaw (always moving in a upward movement) in circular movements. Don't forget about your ears and earlobes.
- 3. Arms and Legs:** Use long strokes on the limbs and circular strokes on the joints (elbows and knees). Always massage toward the direction of your heart.
- 4. Belly and Chest:** Massage the abdomen and chest in broad, clockwise, circular motions. On the abdomen, move up on the right side of the abdomen, then across, then down on the left side.
- 5. Feet:** Finish the massage by spending at least a few minutes massaging your feet.

Sit with the oil for 5-15 minutes if possible so that the oil can absorb and penetrate into the deeper layers of the body, then enjoy a warm bath or shower.





# Detox Your Personal Products

There are a few things you can do to reduce your exposure to toxins in your personal care products. First, read the ingredients list: If you can't pronounce an ingredient, chances are it isn't good for you. Second, keep your eyes open for the following seven ingredients, which are common in personal care products and can cause a variety of health concerns.

## 1. Triclosan

Found in soaps and toothpastes, triclosan is a widely used antimicrobial pesticide; in fact, it's so widely used that there is concern that triclosan could be contributing to making bacteria resistant to antibiotics. Triclosan not only irritates the skin; it may also promote cancer and disrupt the endocrine system.

## 2. Toluene

Toluene is a toxic chemical commonly found in nail products and hair dyes. It is also listed on labels as benzene, toluol, phenylmethane, or methylbenzene. Toluene can affect the respiratory and central nervous systems, damage the liver and kidneys, and cause birth defects and spontaneous abortion.

## 3. Fragrance

Most cosmetics and other personal care products contain scents, which are typically labeled as "fragrances" and do not include the list of chemicals they are comprised of. Fragrances can contribute to air pollution and health issues such as hormone disruption, asthma, allergies, and migraines.

## 4. Parabens

Parabens are estrogen-mimicking preservatives found in many cosmetics and other body-care products. A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that most of the participants tested for paraben exposure came up positive. While exposure is widespread, and studies have shown a potential link between paraben exposure and the proliferation of breast cancer cells, the FDA continues to hold the position that parabens are safe in cosmetics.

## 5. Vitamin A

Vitamin A is important for your health, but it is fat-soluble and can also be dangerous if you accumulate too much in your tissues. Consuming too much vitamin A in supplement form is only one way that you can accumulate toxic levels. These days, cosmetics and lotions can also contain different forms of vitamin A. An assessment conducted through the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety showed that excessive exposure to vitamin A can increase risk of birth defects, osteoporosis, and skin irritation. Another study through the National Toxicology Program found that topical vitamin A cream increased the development of skin cancer and tumors in mice under solar light.

## 6. Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA)

The European Union deemed butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) unsafe for use in fragrance, but BHA can still be found in cosmetics and other personal care products in the United States. The National Toxicology Program considers BHA a carcinogen, and animal studies have indicated it damages the reproductive system.

## 7. Phthalates

Found in hundreds of personal care products and other merchandise, from shower curtains to wood finishes, phthalates are very common in the United States. Most Americans tested by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the *National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey* during 2003 to 2004 showed the metabolites of several phthalates in their urine. Phthalates are considered toxic to normal development and the reproductive system, and can potentially cause endocrine disruption and cancer.

While it's impossible to avoid every toxic chemical, doing a little research before buying a certain product can help minimize your exposure. Once you do your research, find safe products you like, and figure out where to buy them, it could be just as easy to purchase safe products as it is to purchase toxic ones.

Now that you have some helpful tips on how to detox your body, let's dive into the do's and don'ts of how to reduce toxicity in your environment.





# Detox Your ENVIRONMENT

It's not just what you put into your body that matters; you must look at everything that surrounds you. You may have a clean home with shiny countertops and fragrant air—but, if you use standard cleaning products, at what cost? The chemicals you find in average household cleaning products are nothing to smirk at.

In 2014, poison control centers in the United States served 2.2 million people who were exposed to dangerous chemicals—and household cleaners tied as the second leading type of exposure. In addition to acute poisoning, chronic exposure to chemicals in cleaning products can include the following:

- Asthma and other respiratory issues
- Cancer
- Allergies
- Reproductive and developmental problems



## Cleaning Product Safety: What to Look For

There are many safe, natural cleaning agents (such as those listed the following section) that can be cheap and effective. But sometimes they might not be quite as strong as you need them to be, or not quite as convenient as picking up a cleaning product at the store. If you need to buy a cleaning product, you can potentially determine its safety by looking it up through the *Environmental Working Group* here: [http://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners/content/cleaners\\_and\\_health](http://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners/content/cleaners_and_health), which rates the safety of more than 2,500 products. You can also pay attention to the labels. Unfortunately, labels are often vague; manufacturers are not required by law to disclose the ingredients. But you can ask yourself the following four questions to be as safe as possible.

- 1. Does the label say Warning or Danger?** “Danger” is considered more harmful than “Warning”. Some products are safe enough to not require either of these labels.
- 2. Are there instructions on how to use the product?** Be sure to follow them. Labels that say things like “may cause skin irritation” or “vapors harmful” should be taken seriously—wear gloves when handling and ventilate your home (opening the windows, if at all possible) to help reduce harmful vapors.
- 3. Are the claims specific?** Labels like Biodegradable, Natural, or Non-Toxic are not regulated and don’t really mean anything—they are open for interpretation. In addition, Organic doesn’t necessarily mean safe; there are organic chemical substances that can release toxins and cause health issues. Look for more-specific claims, such as “biodegradable within 10 days” or “no phosphate.”
- 4. Are ingredients listed?** If so, select the plant-based, rather than petroleum-based, product.

## 5 Natural, Must-Have Cleaning Agents in Your Cupboard

If you don’t want to bother with labels and research, and want to be sure your cleaning products are completely natural, try the following natural agents the next time a countertop or floor needs to be cleaned.

**Tip:** If you want to get rid of a smell, or add a bit of fragrance to your home, try adding a few drops of essential oil to the cleaning agent.

- 1. Baking soda:** Absorbs odor and serves as an abrasive. To increase abrasion, add a bit of salt. Can be used to scrub sinks, pots, and pans.
- 2. Washing soda:** Removes stains and oven grease.
- 3. White distilled vinegar:** Cleans glass and removes soap scum and grease.
- 4. Hydrogen peroxide:** Disinfects surfaces and can whiten clothes.
- 5. Castile soap:** Mop floors, wash laundry, and clean countertops.

With these alternatives to standard, toxic cleaning products, you can still have shiny countertops and a fragrant home—without the chemical exposure and potential threat to your health.



## 5 Common Environmental Toxins

The following five toxins are commonly found in homes and communities. Note that this is not a comprehensive list of toxins, nor a comprehensive overview of their sources and associated symptoms.

### 1. Radon

Radon is an odorless and tasteless radioactive gas that is produced from the decay of uranium, which exists in rocks and soil. It exists in high levels in mines, caves, and water treatment facilities, and can also be found in homes, particularly in basements and other areas in contact with the ground. You won't know whether it is in your home unless you test for it, and it's worth testing for: Next to smoking, radon is the second most-frequent cause of lung cancer. You can check to see if you live in a radon-heavy zone in the United States through the Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/radon/find-information-about-local-radon-zones-and-radon-programs>

**Radon sources:** Ground-level rooms and water

#### Tips for reducing radon exposure:

- Seal floors and walls.
- Increase under-floor ventilation and overall ventilation.
- Close the basement off from the rest of the house, if possible.
- If you are concerned about radon in your drinking water, have it tested through a drinking water testing laboratory. It can be removed through treatment technologies, such as aeration or granular activated carbon.

### 2. Formaldehyde

Interesting fact: Despite formaldehyde's notoriety for its toxicity, it played a fundamental role in developing the organic carbon solids in our primitive solar system. Formaldehyde exists in nature and also various home products and materials; because it dissipates over time, newer homes tend to have higher levels of formaldehyde. You can test the level of formaldehyde in your home with do-it-yourself kits; however, these are frequently inaccurate—it is best to have a trained professional test your air.

Your reaction to formaldehyde can depend on your sensitivity and the duration your of exposure—symptoms can include sore throat, cough, itchy eyes, and nosebleeds. Formaldehyde can also cause cancer.

**Formaldehyde sources:** Insulation materials, tobacco smoke, grocery bags (and other paper materials), pressed-wood products, cosmetics, deodorant, and shampoo

#### Tips for reducing formaldehyde exposure:

- Buy solid hardwood flooring and furniture, rather than particleboard, which can come with a glue that contains formaldehyde.
- Do not smoke—especially indoors.
- Keep the temperature and humidity in your home as low as comfortably possible, because increases in heat and moisture can increase levels of formaldehyde.
- Circulate fresh air through your home with open windows whenever you can.

### 3. Brominated Flame Retardants

There are more than 75 types of brominated flame retardants (BFRs) available commercially, and they are used to inhibit the flammability of different materials, from natural fiber to household furniture to plastics. Unfortunately, they do not stick to the materials, but filter into your environment. Not all countries deliver equal exposure—women's breast milk in the United States contains a higher level of BFRs than women's breast milk in any other country. Your body accumulates BFRs in fat tissue, and long-term accumulation can cause disruption of the endocrine, reproductive, and immune systems; neurobehavioral toxicity; and cancer.

**BFR sources:** Paint, textiles, paper, furniture, mattresses, electronics, office equipment, carpet padding, and smoke detectors





**Tips for reducing BFR exposure:**

- When possible, buy furniture and mattresses that do not contain flame retardants.
- Get rid of products that include foam made before 2005—this foam is likely to contain more-dangerous BFRs that have since been taken off the market.
- Invest in a HEPA-sealed vacuum cleaner, which traps toxins when you use it. Avoid using a broom if possible—it just stirs dust and accumulated toxins into your air.
- Watch the amount of meat you consume; poultry and red meat can contain high levels of BFRs.

**4. Heavy Metals: Lead and Mercury**

Many heavy metals exist in trace amounts in your body but can pose significant health threats with relatively low-level exposure. Lead and mercury are the most-frequent causes of heavy metal poisoning. Lead can cause neurological, gastrointestinal, kidney, and bone marrow toxicity and neurodevelopmental defects. Mercury poisoning can be marked by headaches, low back pain, weakness, fatigue, tremors, and hallucinations. Efforts are being made to reduce the use of lead and mercury in the sources listed below.

**Lead and mercury sources:**

- Lead: paint and gasoline
- Mercury: dental and medical equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, amalgam fillings, and seafood

**Tips for reducing lead and mercury:**

- If your house was built before 1978, woodwork or other surfaces could be covered with lead paint. Call an expert if you wish to remove lead paint; don't try to do it yourself.
- Beware of tuna, which can contain high levels of mercury. A 140-pound woman eating 4.5 ounces of albacore tuna each week would exceed the safe limit of mercury exposure established by the Environmental Protection Agency. Eat seafood lower on the food chain, and if you take a fish oil supplement, be sure to purchase a brand with a reputation for purity.
- If you have amalgam fillings, discuss with your dentist whether it would benefit you to remove them. Make sure your dentist is committed to following safe protocols for amalgam filling removal.

**5. Particle Pollution**

The particles that compose particle pollution can range from dust, mold, and fungus particles to chemical compounds from fuel emissions. It may come as no surprise that the number one source of air pollution in many cities is automobile emissions. Other sources of emissions can contribute as well: According to Dr. Bonnie Sager, the cofounder of Citizen's Appeal for Leaf Blower Moderation, the landscaping industry accounts for up to 10 percent of air pollution in the United States—and the gas leaf blower is "one of the worst offenders," depositing 30 percent of its raw gasoline back into the air.

Particle pollution can contribute to the development of heart and lung disease, asthma attacks, and lung cancer.

**Particle pollution sources:** Diesel- and gasoline-powered vehicles, lawn equipment, factories, wood-burning and gas stoves, wind-blown dust, damp areas (causing mold growth), and forest fires

**Tips for reducing particle pollution:**

- Instead of gas-powered lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and weed whackers, use electrical machines.
- Don't idle your car, and take public transportation or carpool whenever possible to lessen your contribution to environmental pollution.
- Check fuel-burning furnaces, hot water heaters, and gas ranges in your home annually to make sure exhaust systems are adequate.
- Prevent mold from growing in your home by monitoring humidity levels (especially in your basements and bathrooms) and addressing water-stained areas.

There are many environmental toxins in addition to those mentioned here, but don't feel discouraged. *Every bit of reduction in exposure can help.*







# Detox Your MIND

When most people think of detoxing, they zero in on the body, but detoxing the mind is just as important. If your mind is full of clutter, it becomes difficult to find clarity and peace in your life.

There are many strategies for clearing your mind and putting your head in a position to feel its best. In this chapter, we'll focus on just a few.

## Meditation

Meditation is one of the best tools you have to counteract stress, and your brain's bias to hold onto negativity. By releasing negative thoughts, you are releasing toxicity in the mind.

In meditation, your body actually releases stress and reverses the effects of the flight-or-fight response. This response was really intended to be a short-term mechanism to protect you from perceived danger, which rarely comes in handy nowadays. And the stress generated within you from the response can be harmful to your health. So in many ways, meditation is a way to detoxify both the mind and body.



The uptick of scientific research touting the health benefits of meditation a big reason why the practice is more popular than it's ever been. Not to mention beloved celebrities proclaiming their love for the practice and CEOs and large companies openly discussing how meditation can help productivity and focus. Simply put—it's tough to ignore the mindfulness trend.

Aside from stress reduction, meditation offers the mind many helpful gifts. Many meditators say they are able to release fearful, angry, and painful thoughts. Others say it helps them release confusion and find greater clarity and self-understanding. Others boast that meditation helps them cut through the mental chatter and focus the mind on what's most important at any given moment. If those aren't qualities that showcase detoxifying the mind, what is?

For best results in your mission to detox the mind and handle stress, find stillness through meditation each and every day—even if it's only for 5 or 10 minutes a day.

There are many ways to learn how to meditate. Here at The Chopra Center, we offer a variety of ways for you to learn, such as:

- In-person workshops
- Meditation retreats
- Online courses
- The 21-Day Meditation Experience
- Free virtual programs

Visit [www.chopra.com/meditation](http://www.chopra.com/meditation) to find out about the many ways The Chopra Center can support you in learning how to meditate.

And while it's always helpful to have a teacher or guide to coach, motivate, and encourage you as you start, the truth is that you can start meditating with minimal instruction by using the simple *So Hum* mantra.

*So Hum* is a phrase comprised of two Sanskrit words. The literal translations are:

- So: "That"
- Hum: "I"

Therefore, the translation of *So Hum* is "I Am That." Many Vedic scholars have interpreted the "That" in the mantra to represent the Universe, and it is now widely understood that the *So Hum* mantra symbolizes the fact that we are all connected to the universal energy that is constantly supporting and nourishing us in the ways we need and desire.

### ***So Hum* Meditation Practice**

Set a timer for whatever amount of time is available to you and take a comfortable, upright seat.

- Close your eyes.
- Take a few deep, cleansing breaths.
- Start to repeat the mantra *So Hum* to yourself silently, slowly synching the rhythm of your breath to the mantra.
- As you inhale, silently repeat the word "*So*"
- As you exhale, silently repeat the word "*Hum*"
- Continue breathing slowly and aligning your mantra to your breath, being careful not to rush your breath if you notice your mantra speeding up.
- Each time you notice your mind wander, simply draw your attention back to your silent mantra.

When your timer goes off, gently release your mantra and bring your attention back to your breath. Take a minute or two to sit quietly before opening your eyes.





## Plan a Vacation

Taking annual vacations is another effective way to detox the mind. If you're the type of person who doesn't schedule downtime in your week, vacationing becomes even more important to your physical and mental health. We all need time to turn the mind off, and if we don't plan it, it doesn't just magically happen.

Vacationing doesn't have to mean a big trip to the Mediterranean, or even a three-day weekend out of town. Spending quality time with family and friends, taking time to exercise and pursue enjoyable hobbies, and simply catching up on much-needed sleep are some activities you can incorporate into a simple staycation. What does R & R mean to you? Answer that question, and check out these tips on how to plan your time off.

- **Big Trip:** Haven't taken a big trip in a while? You may be due. Call a travel agent and talk about all of those places you've always dreamed about.
- **Weekend Getaway:** Grab your friends or your significant other and plan a weekend away. Try to decide on a theme for your weekend, whether it be yoga, a spa weekend, hiking, camping, or food or wine tasting.
- **Staycation:** You don't always need the bells and whistles that come with going out of town. Sometimes a little down time and break from the routine is all you need. Not to mention, planning a getaway can sometimes be time-consuming. Keep it simple and stay home, spending time with those you love, doing the things you love.



## Limit Technology

One of the biggest culprits of the “always-on” mind is technology: Laptops, tablets, smartphones, and television. We grab our smartphones when they beep or ring, and pretty much any time we’re bored, curious, or in search of an answer to a question that seems urgent. This type of behavior does not encourage the mind to slow down or pause. It can also disrupt moments of connecting with our family, friends, and real selves.

Taking time away from technology is an effective way to give the mind a rest. It also helps with minimizing distraction and staying focused. Here are a few ways of limiting your technology usage:

- **Schedule Mini Technology Vacations:** Designate device-free windows of time each week where you ditch your device and stay in the moment. You can do this for longer stretches of time or small windows each week, for example try going for a walk without your phone every day, turn your phone off every Sunday (or any one day a week), or silence your phone from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. each night.
- **Silence Your Notifications:** When you have an important task at hand or need a mental break, turn off your notifications. This means all app notifications that pop up on your screen, email or calendar reminders that ding or appear, and your phone’s volume.
- **Take a Social Media Break:** Take your social media apps off of your smart phone and schedule one 10-minute session every day to check your social media accounts, instead. Set a timer so you don’t get lost in the rabbit hole of feeds, videos, and photos.

## Quit a Bad Habit

Are you a smoker? Pack rat? Excessive worrier? Facebook addict? In a bad relationship? Toxins come into our lives in many forms—physical, environmental, mental, and emotional. Consider if you might be:

- Participating in any unhealthy patterns or habits.
- Spending time in relationships that are not offering you value or joy.
- Holding onto anything that no longer serves you.

If you notice there are things to let go of, find a way to limit or release them to create space in your mind and your life for all the NEW that will help you grow in a positive direction.

During a detox is the best time to evaluate not only what areas of your life could use a detox, but also what areas of your life could use some positive attention—such as your emotional world, your relationships, your passions, and your commitment to daily self-care.

Happy detoxing!



# Contributors



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***Certified Yoga and Meditation Instructor and Author***

Melissa is a certified yoga and meditation instructor, and passionate about motivating people to live a healthy, balanced, and purposeful life. Melissa is the author of *The Type A's Guide to Mindfulness: Meditation for Busy Minds and Busy People*, a practical guide for new meditators in the modern world, and the creator of [mindfulminutes.com](http://mindfulminutes.com), a personal blog about mindfulness and life balance in the digital age.



## Jennifer Partridge

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Jennifer Partridge is a T.V. host, motivational speaker, author, certified emotional freedom techniques coach, yoga teacher and founder of *Our New Earth*. Her work has been featured on many T.V. shows, documentaries, radio shows, live events, and at retreats. Jennifer is passionate about helping people create a healthy life from the inside out.





## Valencia Porter, M.D., M.P.H., FACN

*Physician and Vedic Educator*

Dr. Valencia Porter is the Chopra Center's Director of Integrative Medicine. Board-certified in both general preventive medicine and integrative holistic medicine, she has an integrative approach that incorporates many areas of health and healing, including Ayurveda, functional medicine, environmental medicine, nutrition, herbal medicine, and biofield (energy) therapies. She is passionate about food, nutrients, and the interaction with our environment from the microcosm to the macrocosm. As a Vedic Educator she is certified to teach Primordial Sound Meditation, Perfect Health Ayurvedic Lifestyle, and Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga. In addition to her clinical practice at the Chopra Center, Dr. Porter is adjunct faculty at the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine and in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of California San Diego. She lectures to a wide variety of audiences and has published numerous scientific and popular articles and book chapters.



## Valerie Sjoberg

*Acupuncturist, Holistic Health Coach, and Writer*

Valerie's interest in healing began in her early twenties when doctors told her she would need to give up running and other physical activities forever due to debilitating back injuries. This spurred an exploration into mind-body and alternative medicine, which ultimately healed her back and allowed her to resume the activities she loved. Today, she works as an acupuncturist and health coach to help activate others' self-healing abilities, and is inching toward a master's degree in nutrition and functional medicine. She is also a professional writer and aims to accumulate enough words and inspiration to write a novel someday.



## Rachelle Williams

*Vedic Educator*

As a Chopra Center Vedic Educator, Rachelle is certified in Primordial Sound Meditation, Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga, and Perfect Health: Ayurvedic Lifestyle. She is grateful to share her knowledge and passion for these teachings by inspiring others to become empowered and create greater happiness and well-being in their own lives.