

# Diary of a juice cleanse

Feeling sluggish? A short juice cleanse may be just the thing you need to boost your vitality and put a spring in your step. *W's* editor Nicole Allen gives the Juice Revolution programme a try

It's mid-winter and too many late nights on my laptop have left me looking as weary as I feel. My diet is erratic (hands up, fellow stress eaters!) and exercise is something that happens only in my head. With a big birthday looming, and a beach holiday before spring, I'm desperate to do something that will make me feel better. Enter Juice Revolution's "7 Day Super Juice Diet". I discovered the programme by chance, but it's not long (ok, only an hour!) before founder Fiona Stander's enthusiasm for juicing rubs off. With the promise of clearer skin, brighter eyes, a flatter stomach (yes, really!) and a rested digestive system, I commit to giving it a try.

Fiona offers several detox programmes for busy people on the go. Her juices are blended, bottled and blast frozen (to retain nutrients), and can be delivered directly to your door – all of which makes the process blissfully easy to begin. All you need to do is defrost each day's juices overnight (five, plus one "hot and spicy tea") and consume them at the correct times to keep your blood sugar levels stable. Of course, Fiona warns of possible side effects: headaches, fatigue and skin breakouts, but given that I suffer from all three already, I'm undeterred.

## ✓ DAY 1

Today's juices look so vibrant and delicious that I can't wait to begin. I'm encouraged by Juice Revolution's bright information pack, which includes a detailed timetable (what to drink, when) and daily tip cards. Juice one at 8am is a zesty lime, apple, pineapple, cucumber and avocado blend that quickly becomes my favourite drink on the programme. I sip it slowly, savouring the sweetness, and try to "chew" each mouthful consciously as instructed. By late morning however, I notice a dull headache creeping in (a symptom of sugar and caffeine withdrawal, according to the tips). Sipping water and herbal tea helps, as do the rest of the day's juices. That night, preparing my family's dinner is a challenge – not because I'm hungry, but because I suddenly realise how much I pick at food while cooking. My stomach grumbles and my head throbs. I quickly warm the last drink of the day – an

appetising Hot 'n Spicy apple and cinnamon tea – but the distraction doesn't last long and I collapse into bed early.

## ✓ DAY 2

Fiona recommends some form of daily exercise while on the cleanse, so I set my alarm early with good intentions. Unfortunately sleep wins – not because I feel unwell or weak, but rather because it is cold and dark outside. Lying in bed I try to banish the guilt and resolve to do better tomorrow! Breakfast later is the same delectable mix as yesterday and I wolf it down. A birthday tea in the office passes by easily without temptation, but by 11am my dull headache has returned and my mind drifts to the chocolate cake nearby. I appreciate the next two juices, even the 2pm bitter blend of spinach, kale, watercress and beetroot, but by late afternoon my head is pounding and I feel exhausted (according to the daily tips, the lethargy is my body's response to poor food choices in the past). I resist the urge that evening to pinch red pepper off my children's supper plates and remind myself that I'm still not actually physically hungry (it's an amazing realisation). Instead, I drink water and try to imagine my cells doing a vitamin-boosting boogie! It works briefly and soon I'm fast asleep on the couch...



“Health is the only thing that you can't buy, you have to do.”

## ✓ DAY 3

I open my eyes on Saturday, delighted to find that my throbbing headache has eased and my energy levels have lifted. My stomach looks noticeably slimmer too and my husband remarks that my skin has started to glow. So far, so good! We're heading out for the morning, so I peck my first two juices and resolve to resist restaurant temptation (tip: it helps to curb social activity over the cleanse, particularly at night when willpower is weak). Breakfast, a lemon-ginger combo, doesn't even touch sides, so I drink extra water and rooibos tea and try not to watch the clock until my next juice is due. (The programme does allow for one hunger S.O.S food a day – a banana, avocado or small handful of cherries – but I never reach the point of necessity.) A thick, creamy yoghurt combination sees me through the afternoon and by night, my energy levels are high. Today's motivation tips encourage an "attitude of gratitude" and I'm keenly aware of what a privilege it is to be able to feed my body so well. I go to bed pleased at having chosen the seven-day juice diet, and not the shorter three- or five-day programmes, as I'm definitely not ready for this experience to end.

## ✓ DAY 4

According to Fiona, by now all refined sugar, caffeine and nicotine has left the body, so I embrace today as a new beginning. I feel great (healthy and virtuous) and sail through most of the day, even managing the afternoon Super Detox Juice (which Fiona describes as a challenge to get down) without difficulty. My family's supertime serves as a reminder of how much I'd like to actually chew something now, so I drink herbal tea and have sugar-free gum instead. The cleanse is definitely a case of mind over matter; I soldier on, referring to the motivation cards where Fiona says: "Health is the only thing that you can't buy, you have to do. This program is a test of character for everybody...". Still, by 8pm, I'm hungry and restless, so I make the Hot 'n Spicy tea early and force myself to go to bed.

## ✓ DAY 5

I start today with 45 minutes of exercise and have to fight off a stab of disappointment when I hop on the scale: my weight is the same as yesterday. I refer back to Fiona's notes on prioritising health and longevity over weight loss and try not to focus on the short skirt I intend wearing to my birthday bash in four days' time! Day 5 is referred to as Juice High Day and it is certainly my easiest, and most satisfying, on the diet. Time flies and any mental cravings (for healthy, solid food) are simply overcome. I work late without tiredness and, for the first time in a week, I don't feel desperate for my evening apple and cinnamon tea (though this ritual has become my favourite part of each day).

## ✓ DAY 6

Two days to go! I have a breakfast function this morning, so I make sure that I drink my first juice – a filling yoghurt blend – just before arrival so that I'm not tempted by the buffet table. It works and I don't give solid food a thought, until I try to get through a less-than-delicious Green Super Juice at 2pm. I persevere, focusing on the goodness (such as oxygen-rich chlorophyll) that the drink contains. The final two drinks of the day are just as green in taste and appearance – neither filling nor satisfying – and briefly I feel as if I've had enough. (It's at this point that Fiona reminds clients that the juice diet is a choice; one we are fortunate to be able to make.) Later we join friends for live music at a nearby pub. I order herbal tea – and no-one bats an eyelid.

## ✓ DAY 7

My stomach actually grows for food today, so I make sure I savour (and finish every last drop of) all five juices. The day passes quickly and easily, and I receive a few compliments on my brighter, softer skin. I analyse the past seven days and realise that despite a few challenging moments, the juice cleanse has actually been fairly easy. I can definitely feel the advantages of eliminating caffeine and processed foods from my diet (and of getting several hours' extra sleep in the week). Am I excited to eat solid food tomorrow? Yes. But I'm reluctant to let go of this good feeling too soon.

## POST-CLEANSE

The day after my cleanse finishes I'm delighted to discover that I have lost 3kgs and am sporting a flat stomach. Mentally I feel lighter too and have loved not having to prepare food for myself (oh, the time it saves!). To ease back into eating, and to give my metabolism time to adjust, Fiona suggests light food such as fruit, yoghurt, steamed vegetables and salads. She also advocates at least one raw juice a day. Interestingly, I have no desire to eat unhealthy foods and it takes a few days to even have a cup of coffee. Fast-forward two weeks and I confess that I'm back to late-night working and getting too little sleep. I've also regained some of the weight (I blame a birthday celebration that stretched an entire weekend!), but am consuming more herbal teas than coffee (cinnamon tea is a firm new favourite). I'm trying to steer clear of refined carbs, particularly late at night and am continuing with barley grass and acidophilus daily. Would I do a juice diet again? Definitely! It was challenging, but not arduous (Fiona's daily emails keep motivation high) and overall, I found the experience liberating. If you're looking to lose weight for a special occasion, the programme is definitely an option (just don't do it too close to the big day or your dress will no longer fit you!). Any one of Fiona's programmes is also a great kick to get your health back on track.



## JUICING BENEFITS:

According to Fiona, juicing

- boosts the immune system;
- increases vitality;
- detoxes the body with mega doses of antioxidants; and
- offers fast absorption of nutrients (enzymes, minerals and vitamins) by removing insoluble fibre that slows the process down.



## Juice Revolution supplements:

The following are taken (in tablet form) to support your cleanse:

- **BARLEY GRASS** – a powerful, nutrient-dense superfood that contains essential amino acids, vitamins and minerals. It also contains chlorophyll to help cleanse the colon.
- **SPIRULINA** – a phenomenal protein-rich algae that has been found to contain one of the most concentrated amounts of nutrients, phytonutrients and antioxidants of any plant.
- **LACTOBACILLUS ACIDOPHILUS** – a beneficial bacterium and probiotic that supports digestion and keeps the gut healthy. 

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