

**NUTRITION**



## HOW TO FIX A “BROKEN DIET”

### The four-step fix to get your eating on track

**Ana Rita Horta**

**I**n this article I will share the four main steps I use to help my patients fix a “broken diet” and restart correct eating habits after Christmas.

**Step 1 – Don’t blame yourself**

Do not worry if you gain weight during the Christmas period. You can get rid of that “extra weight” as soon as you go back to a healthy diet and physical exercise programme. The weight gained will not remain forever. Although you cannot alter what’s past, you have the key that can change the future – by starting right now!

**Step 2 – Detox your body**

The organ that processes all the food you eat is the liver. After food is digested, nutrients and possible toxins are absorbed by the blood stream. The liver then processes everything, looking for toxins, fats and sugar, and packs everything into cholesterol. This is the reason why I suggest beginning your fat-loss programme with a liver and bowel detox because they make a perfect team, working together to eliminate fat and toxins.

**Step 3 – Eating more alkaline foods**

You can improve your overall health and lose weight more quickly when the correct PH balance in your body is achieved, provided by food

we eat. Most of the foods and beverages that you eat or drink during the Christmas period are high acid forming (sugars, bad quality fats and oils, processed flours, red meat, alcohol, sodas etc.).

When you add more alkaline foods (green vegetables and grains, fresh fruits, good fats and oils, spices and aromatic herbs, seeds), into the diet, you will enjoy the benefits of a pH balance and trigger the body to start burning fat instead of storing it. Don’t forget to drink at least 1.5l of alkaline water (pH>7) or herbal teas daily.

**Step 4 – Exercise**

The effects of exercise on your weight always depend on the type of activity you choose (cardio, weight training, yoga, etc.), frequency, intensity and duration of your session. If you don’t know what type of exercise is suitable for you, here are some tips:

Calorie burning (cardiovascular exercise): we burn calories



**“Food to eat: vegetables – at least 400g per day”**

while we exercise (low intensity, long duration), and if we combine strength training, we will burn calories after the session is finished. It is advisable to exercise at least three times per week, for at least one hour.

**Muscle building:** Exercise can help to build metabolically active muscle. For every pound of muscle you gain, you will burn 30 to 50 extra calories at rest.

**Yoga:** This type of activity can bring your body back into its

natural alignment, level out imbalances and strengthen physical weaknesses. Bear in mind that yoga can also increase your flexibility, relaxation, breathing and balance, in that specific order. Anyone can improve his or her posture, energy levels and endurance by practising yoga regularly.

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FOODS TO AVOID	FOODS TO EAT
Dairy products (all cow’s, sheep’s and goat’s milk), yoghurt, cheese, cream, sour cream. Soy milk and yoghurts	Vegetable drinks (rice, almond, coconut and hemp milk, without added sugar)
Grains containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt)	Gluten-free grains (millet, quinoa, brown rice, buckwheat, sweet potatoes, amaranth, etc.)
Corn	Vegetables (all allowed, at least 400g per day) including beans
Oils and fats (hydrogenated oils, trans fatty acids, corn, soy, palm, sunflower, butter and margarine)	Cold-pressed oils and fats (canola, flaxseed, hemp, extra-virgin olive oil, avocado)
Alcohol, caffeine and chocolate	Water (alkaline, pH>7) or herbal teas
Peanuts	Nuts and seeds, unsalted (all except peanuts)
Sugar and artificial sweeteners (except fructose in fresh fruits)	
Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit, tangerines). Lemons are ok.	Fruits (all except citric fruit)
Red meats and cold meats (beef, pork, lamb, sausages, etc.)	Fish and white meat (all fish and seafood, except shellfish)
Egg yolks	Egg whites (free range)