

# The ACID TEST

In today's fast-paced society, where stress levels are high and relaxation time is scarce, it can be difficult to find the time to follow a healthy, balanced diet. Things such as animal protein, fried foods, processed foods, refined sugars and pasteurised dairy products are often firm fixtures in our diets. One thing that all these foods and a stressful lifestyle have in common is that they cause acid to be produced in the body. This, in turn, causes the body to become unbalanced, stealing precious energy and slowing down its capacity for healing and self-repair.

In order to remain in a balanced state of health, the human body needs to be in an alkaline state. The measure of whether the body is acidic or alkaline is expressed through pH levels – pH standing for 'potential of hydrogen'. A reading between 0 and 7 indicates acidity; and from 7 to 14 indicates alkalinity. A pH reading of 7.0 is perfectly neutral.

You can get an idea of your acid-alkaline balance by using pH strips or litmus paper. Simply dip the strip in a sample of urine or saliva and note the colour the strip turns. Then check this against an accompanying chart to find out your pH level.

When there is an overload of acid in the body, this acid will be eliminated through the skin, resulting in symptoms such as eczema, acne, boils, dry skin, headaches, muscle cramps, swelling,

Want to achieve optimum wellness? Your first step is to decrease your body's acidity levels which is why an alkalisating diet and regular detoxing can work wonders, says Fiona Robertson



irritation and general aches and pains. Chronic symptoms show up when all elimination possibilities have been exhausted. In this case, excess acid is stored in fatty tissue such as the breasts, hips, thighs and belly and is also deposited in organs such as the heart, pancreas, liver and colon.

Certain key minerals are needed by the body to neutralize acids, conduct energy, transport oxygen, deliver the essential nutrients to our cells and regulate our pH levels. Equally these minerals are necessary to remove waste such as dead cells and toxins from our bodies. If we are not getting these key minerals from our diet then they are taken from our tissues to compensate. For example calcium is leached from our bones and magnesium from our muscles. Weakened bones can result in osteoporosis and weak organs and systems give way to dysfunctional thyroid glands, adrenals and liver to name a few.

However, the good news is that if you are suffering the negative effects of an overly acidic body, you can regain your health, your balance – and your life – starting right now!

## Food as medicine

One of the best ways to correct an overly acidic body is to clean up the digestive tract with a detox. This is a period of time in which we cleanse our bodies by reducing the amount of toxins we ingest. The fewer toxins we put in, the better equipped the body is to release the toxins we already have stored in our systems.

By increasing the amount of alkaline-forming foods in our diet we can aid this

cleansing process and restore the balance of the body from an acidic to an alkaline state.

As the Greek physician Hippocrates said: "Everyone has a physician inside him or her; we just have to help it in its work. The natural healing force within each one of us is the greatest force in getting well. Our food should be our medicine. Our medicine should be our food."

Foods are generally categorised as acid or alkaline-based, depending on the residue they leave in the body after they have been

metabolised. A food that increases the acidity of your urine after it is ingested is classified as an acid-forming food, whereas if a food increases the alkalinity of your bodily fluids it is known as an alkaline-forming food.

Interestingly, the effect that certain foods have on the body's pH level may be different to the pH of the foods themselves. For example, orange juice is highly acidic due to its high citrus acid content, but after being metabolised it will cause urine to become alkaline.

## Going green

In simple terms most grains, dairy products, meats, seeds, legumes and nuts tend to be acid-forming. Most fruits and vegetables tend to be alkaline-forming and the greener the food the more alkalizing it is.

Green foods tend to be full of chlorophyll, which is the key molecule for delivering oxygen throughout the body. It reduces the binding of carcinogens to DNA in the liver and other organs, which can be a major cause of cancer, and also breaks down liver and kidney stones. In addition to this, chlorophyll aids the building of new tissues, enzymes and hormones.

Increasing the amount of chlorophyll in the diet is an excellent way of achieving optimum health and boosting immunity to disease and infection. Great sources of chlorophyll include asparagus, bell peppers, broccoli, brussels sprouts, coriander, green cabbage, turnip greens, celery, collard greens, germinated sprouts like alfalfa and sunflower greens, green beans, green peas, kale, leeks, parsley, rocket, cos lettuce, ocean vegetables, spinach and wheatgrass.

Wheat and barley grass are particularly good sources of chlorophyll. For example, wheatgrass contains more than 100 food elements, including every identified mineral and trace mineral and every vitamin in the B-complex family. It has a 25 per cent higher protein content than meat, fish, eggs or dairy products. No wonder most animals thrive on grass!



# The beginner's detox

The aim with this beginner's detox is to consume as many alkalizing foods as possible throughout the day. This is achieved through following a diet packed with fresh fruit, high water content vegetables and greens, all of which can be digested quickly and easily, giving you more energy.

One of the tastiest and fastest ways to consume your daily quota of alkalizing nutrients is by starting your day with a morning green smoothie consisting of pure fruits, vegetables and greens. There are two recipes listed on this page to get you started – they are quick and easy to make with a high-speed blender.

The best thing about this diet is that when you have cleansed your insides and broken any habits that are detrimental to your health you will actually start to crave green foods and fruit and vegetables! Your body demands what it needs. It may take time and education but it is a worthwhile journey. Below is a satisfying and simple menu for the week that will help you to achieve a beginner's detox. In order to get the full recipes for the listed meals, visit the following website and request a free e-book:

[retreat-biarritz.com/home-detox-box-juice-colon-cleanse-spa-body-cleansing.html](http://retreat-biarritz.com/home-detox-box-juice-colon-cleanse-spa-body-cleansing.html)

## BREAKFAST

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so if you choose the right foods you will notice a marked improvement in your cravings, energy

levels and hunger. It is possible to last a long time on a fruit breakfast and, better still, you can eat as much fruit as you like all morning! Eat a serving of fruit every hour and a half until two hours before lunch time to keep your energy levels high. Alternatively make yourself a green smoothie for breakfast and get a huge energy boost that will last you until lunchtime.

## LUNCH

When preparing your lunch, the ideal ratio should be that three quarters of the meal consists of fresh salad vegetables with one quarter of cooked or dense foods such as a protein or a carbohydrate. Avoid heavy proteins like meat and fish and don't mix proteins and carbohydrates as this combination is so energy-zapping that you will automatically feel tired and lethargic after eating. The afternoon slump is caused by the amount of energy it takes to digest these heavy combinations, so make sure you avoid them this week.

## DINNER

As with lunch, three quarters of your meal should consist of fresh salad vegetables with one quarter of cooked or dense foods such as a protein or a carbohydrate. The menu options below include some light meal options for the week that are tasty and easy to digest. You will be left with more energy and have a better night's sleep as a result.

**FURTHER INFO**  
 Fiona Robertson is the creator of the Home Detox Box, a seven-day total body detox you can do in the comfort of your own home. She also runs weekly colon cleanse and detox retreats at Retreat Biarritz in south west France. For more information visit [homedetoxbox.com](http://homedetoxbox.com) and [retreatbiarritz.com](http://retreatbiarritz.com)

## Smoothie recipe Tropical green smoothie

### INGREDIENTS:

- 6 large handfuls of baby spinach or rocket
- 1 large fresh juicy mango

### DIRECTIONS:

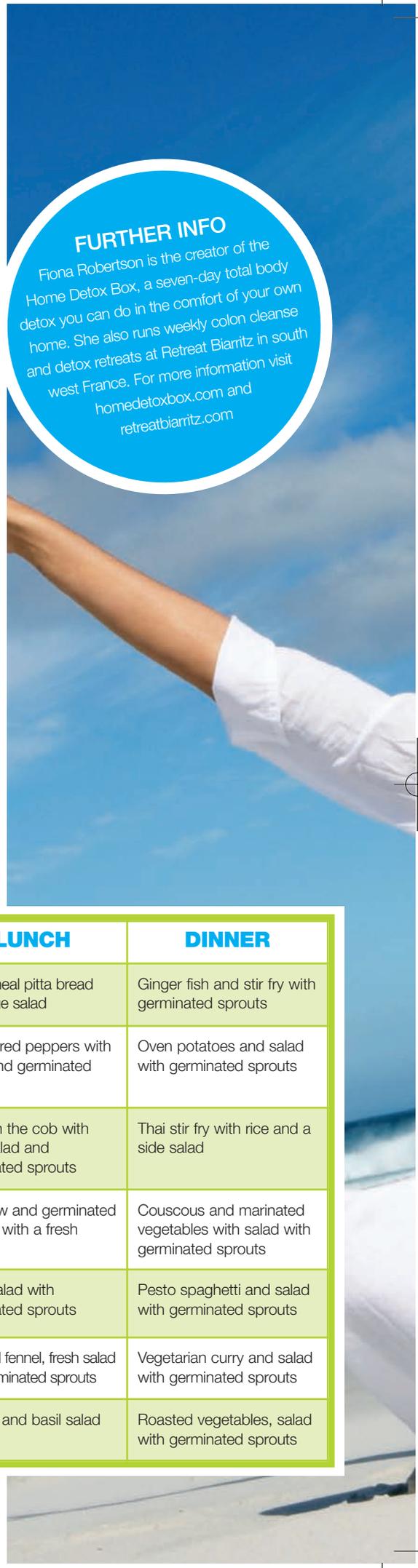
Chop the mango and place in a high-speed blender. Add the spinach. Blend the two together, making sure every piece of fruit and green has been thoroughly blended.

The smoothie will keep for about 12 hours in the fridge and will still taste good. Take some with you in an air-tight flask for a snack later.



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DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MONDAY	Carrot and ginger juice	Wholemeal pitta bread and large salad	Ginger fish and stir fry with germinated sprouts
TUESDAY	Fruit smoothie (green)	Stuffed red peppers with salad and germinated sprouts	Oven potatoes and salad with germinated sprouts
WEDNESDAY	Raw muesli	Corn on the cob with fresh salad and germinated sprouts	Thai stir fry with rice and a side salad
THURSDAY	Fruit smoothie (green)	Coleslaw and germinated sprouts with a fresh salad	Couscous and marinated vegetables with salad with germinated sprouts
FRIDAY	Nut milk	Nutty salad with germinated sprouts	Pesto spaghetti and salad with germinated sprouts
SATURDAY	Fruit salad	Roasted fennel, fresh salad and germinated sprouts	Vegetarian curry and salad with germinated sprouts
SUNDAY	Freshly squeezed fruit juice	Tomato and basil salad	Roasted vegetables, salad with germinated sprouts



## Smoothie recipe

### Green Pina Colada

**INGREDIENTS:**

1 mango

1 pineapple

1 orange

1 cup of coconut water

1 cup of water

2 large handfuls of spinach

**DIRECTIONS:**

Blend all ingredients together in a high-speed blender until a smooth consistency is reached.



## Cleansing breath



**NATURAL HEALTH'S YOGA EXPERT, SUE FULLER, RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING YOGA MOVE TO HELP WITH YOUR DETOX:**

Uddiyana Bandha, otherwise referred to as an abdominal contraction, will help to remove toxins from the body. It will also speed up digestion, prevent constipation and stimulate, massage and tone the abdominal organs.

Sit comfortably with the ankles crossed and a straight spine. Place your palms on your knees and breathe slowly in and out through your nose. When you are ready, inhale deeply through your nose, retain the breath for a moment, and exhale through the mouth making sure you completely empty your lungs. When your lungs are empty, draw your shoulders up, drop your chin onto your chest and contract your abdominal muscles by pulling your navel back towards your spine. Hold this position without inhaling for as long as is comfortable. When you are ready, relax your abdominal muscles, release your shoulders, return your head to its starting position and inhale through the nose. Repeat the technique. Complete three rounds five times a week first thing in the morning.

To download Sue's instructional yoga and relaxation classes visit [yoga2hear.co.uk](http://yoga2hear.co.uk)

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