

Take 5: Body to Mind Practice

We hear all sorts of conflicting information about the benefits and drawbacks of caffeine. You might be wondering just how harmful your cup of coffee is to your health, especially if you're addicted and feeling skeptical about why you need to cut it out of your food plan for the next 4 days (and beyond). The problem with caffeine is that most people consume way too much of it, then show signs of toxicity. How much is too much depends on your age, cortisol levels, stress resilience, and how your body processes caffeine. For the average adult, toxicity occurs at 500 to 1,000 milligrams. An 8 ounce cup of "Joe" contains 152-200 milligrams of caffeine depending on the brew...and who drinks just 8 ounces. A Dunkin Donuts small coffee is 10 ounces and it just escalates from there. Bottom line: All of us benefit from taking time off from caffeine and seeing what happens to our sleep, weight, and energy.

AFTER THESE 4 DAYS: What next?

After you complete the 4 days of caffeine detoxing it's time to reset your cortisol levels a step further. It's time to focus on the bigger picture of resetting your inner clock and improve your metabolism. Studies show there is a connection between an inner clock gone haywire and getting fat. Here are a few ways to reset your inner clock:

1) Sunlight

Get at least 20 minutes of bright sunlight each day. This helps you make more melatonin, which helps regulate sleep and wake cycles.

2) Bedtime

Make your bedtime darker by removing all exterior light with room darkening shades and drapes. Remove any electronic devices with LED lights. The light suppresses your pineal gland, the endocrine gland in the middle of your brain that secretes melatonin.

3) Take your vitamins

Melatonin is made in your body from serotonin, and you can make more if your body is sufficient in vitamins B6 and C. Eat sunflower seeds, pistachio nuts, cooked tuna, wild salmon, halibut, swordfish, turkey, chicken, spinach and avocados for 50-100 milligrams of B6 a day. Eat red and green hot chili peppers, guavas, bell peppers, parsley, thyme, all dark green leafy vegetables, cauliflower, kiwi, papayas, clementine, oranges, and strawberries for 1,000-2,000 milligrams of vitamin C a day.

4) Hug someone & meditate daily

Hugs raise oxytocin, the hormone of love, bonding, and social connection, and it's your best ally against stress. Take a few minutes each day for a guided meditation. 2 free apps you can use are CALM and HEADSPACE. Download to your phone and start resetting your stress and cortisol levels.

