



BY GABRIELLE MCMAHON, DIRECTOR  
INFINITY YOGA & WELLBEING

# recipe for WELLBEING

IF YOU BARELY SURVIVED the silly season now is the time to improve your eating habits.

**D**id you use any of my tips in the December issue and put them into practice? Well if you did great, if you didn't it's never too late to give it a go.

I have been hearing from many people lately that they want to improve their eating habits once the silly season is over. If you happen to be one of these people and you want to give your body a rest and start the year with a healthier way of eating and lifestyle, then you may like to read on.

The main things to lessen in your daily routine are sugar, caffeine, highly processed foods and alcohol. I understand that it can be difficult to go cold turkey, however if you slowly decrease your portions of these items I guarantee that you will feel better in the months to come. Also, don't give up if on occasion you have not stuck to your plan. Remember that all is not lost, tomorrow is a new day... leave yesterday behind.

## Sugar

White sugar in particular is highly processed and should be used sparingly. Try using good quality honey in your tea or on your cereal for a sweetener. Good quality honey such as Manuka honey also has wonderful healing properties.

## Caffeine

This can be the most difficult for some. As stated before, slowly cutting down is a good way to start with caffeine. Have one less cup of coffee/tea than your daily quantity on a weekly basis, then lessen it again the week after until you get to one cup of coffee/tea. To make it easier on yourself cut out the final cup of coffee/tea over a weekend. It is not uncommon to feel lethargic or have headaches so rest up and take it easy on that weekend.

Herbal tea such as peppermint is fantastic to combat a sweet tooth. Instead of a short black after your meal try a peppermint tea which also aids digestion. Dandelion tea is a great coffee substitute. It is instant, similar to coffee granules, can be drunk black or with milk and honey to taste if you wish, and it also aids the liver.

When you are cutting out that one coffee each week, I suggest substituting it with a herbal tea. (Coffee, black tea, green tea, cocoa (chocolate) all contain caffeine).

## Highly Processed Foods

Just think white bread, white sugar, cereals containing an abundance of added sugar, and cheese in jars or in tubes. Highly processed foods usually contain high quantities of sugar, preservatives and

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additives. You only have to read the back of the packets and you will soon learn what is highly processed. I usually go by the rule of the more numbers ie. 220, 216 the more highly processed it is. Also, look at your food and ask yourself does it look fresh and alive? If the answer is no then have a rethink about eating it.

## Alcohol

Even though it is said that red wine is rich in antioxidants and one standard glass per day is fine to have, if you are serious about giving your body some time out then you should take alcohol out of your daily diet. If you are the type of person who loves your wine every night, then maybe try a spritzer, half white wine and soda and try to have three alcohol-free nights per week.

## Cleansing your body

The yoga posture for you this issue will assist you cleansing your body from the inside out. It improves digestion, stimulates the liver and kidneys, reduces fatigue and anxiety, relieves headache and insomnia, stretches the hamstrings, calves and hips, and strengthens the thighs and knees.

## Uttanasana – (Standing Forward Bend)

Contraindications/Cautions - Back injury: do this pose with bent knees, or perform with your hands on the wall, legs perpendicular to your torso, and arms parallel to the floor.

## Step by Step

1. Stand in Tadasana, feet together, legs energized, kneecaps lifted, lift ribs away from hips, spine and head straight, arms by your side.
2. Place hands on hips. Inhale, lift chest and head slightly. Exhale

bend forward from the hip joints, not from the waist. As in all the forward bends, the emphasis is on lengthening the front torso as you move more fully into the position.

3. If possible, with your knees straight, bring your palms or fingertips to the floor slightly in front of or beside your feet, or bring your palms to the backs of your ankles. If this isn't possible, cross your forearms and hold your elbows. Press the heels firmly into the floor and lift the sitting bones toward the ceiling. Turn the top thighs slightly inward.
4. With each inhalation in the pose, lift and lengthen the front torso just slightly; with each exhalation release a little more fully into the forward bend. In this way the torso oscillates almost imperceptibly with the breath. Let your head hang from the root of the neck, which is deep in the upper back, between the shoulder blades.
5. Stay in the pose for 30 seconds to one minute.
6. Bring your hands back onto your hips and reaffirm the length of the front torso. Then press your tailbone down and into the pelvis and come up on an inhalation with a long front torso.

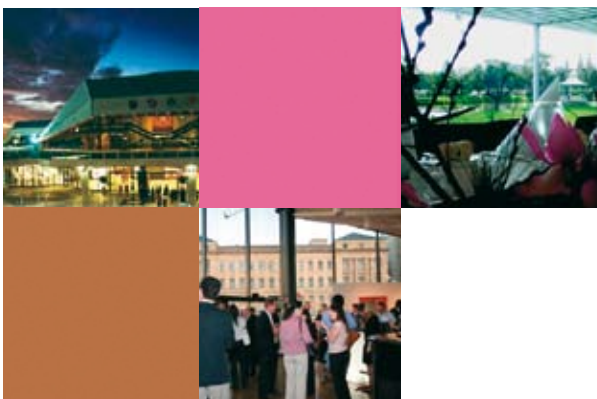
## Beginner's Tip

To increase the stretch in the backs of your legs, bend your knees slightly. Imagine that the sacrum is sinking deeper into the back of your pelvis and bring the tailbone closer to the pubis. Then against this resistance, push the top thighs back and the heels down and straighten the knees again. Be careful not to straighten the knees by locking them back (you can press your hands against the back of each knee to provide some resistance); instead let them straighten as the two ends of each leg move farther apart.

Wishing you wellness & happiness, namaste.



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