

# Conditioning the *inner body*

Chris James looks at the practical steps that a home Yoga Detox plan can do to cleanse and purify your body, mind and emotional wellbeing.

*Despite the claims and so-called "advancements" of western medicine, human health across the world is deteriorating at an alarming rate. Cancer, heart disease, liver infection, respiratory ailments, and nervous disorders have spread like wildfire, ravaging all segments of society. The prolonged degenerative illnesses that a century ago rarely manifested except in the weak and elderly have now become everyday conditions in the young and adult population.*

*The root cause is TOXICITY. The use of preservatives and additives in our food, our hectic lifestyles, chemically-contaminated air and water, and the use of medical drugs have all contributed to the systematic increase of toxicity in the body and impacted on the quality of our lives.*

*The only way to avoid toxicity would be to live an ascetic lifestyle, eating only wild foods and drinking spring water, complemented by moving our bodies for 2/3 hours of physical activity.*

*The toxicity of the human body cannot be corrected by injections, western invasive surgery or any hastily contrived remedies – The one and only way to counteract self-toxification is by self-detoxification. Fortunately, a systematic detox can be done simply, quickly, and efficiently:*

*Although the body is designed to eliminate toxins, it can become overburdened by modern lifestyles and the environment we live in.*





### CONDITIONING THE INNER BODY

Regular detox is the best way to purge the body. An effective detox will result in you feeling clear-headed and relaxed, having easy digestion with regular bowel movements – with a fully-functional and healthy digestive system you can remain physically fit and mentally active for your entire life. You will also enjoy sound sleep and feeling refreshed on awakening, and of course weight loss.

For any detox program to be effective you must take at least three days of rest and relaxation for the main part of the detox, which is how long it takes for the body's internal cleansing and healing mechanisms to shift into full gear. Seven days is even better, because it takes seven days of complete rest and clean living to purify the blood stream and cleanse the internal organs and lymphatic system.

**Remember to set a date:** Make sure that you plan ahead and consult your diary. Try to choose a period of relative calm in your life when you attempt the detox, like a weekend. Try not to complete a detox when you have a busy patch at work.

The following cleansing and rejuvenating regimen detoxifies the system, purifies the bodily tissues, and strengthens the immune system. The following recommendations may be included in a 3-day, 7-day, or 12-day detox programme.

## Diet

The basic dietary strategy for effective Detox is to eliminate all acid forming foods and beverages and imbibe only a few simple alkalising foods. What you don't eat is actually more important than what you do eat.

**Foods to avoid:** All processed foods, sugar, wheat, dairy, hydrogenated oils, carbonated soft drinks, coffee and alcohol, which contribute to the acidosis of the blood, must be excluded from your diet. If you are a coffee fiend try to reduce the amount of coffee you take in the days leading up to your detox start date!

The cornerstones of the detox diet are fresh fruits and fresh vegetables. There are various companies that will deliver to your door, or try your local fruit and veg or farmers' market.

The best choice in vegetables are the ones that actively heal and cleanse the body including sweet potatoes, yams, squash, pumpkin, carrot, beetroot, cabbage, asparagus, celery, parsley, and all dark leafy greens. Garlic and ginger may also be included in the detox to spice up the taste of the vegetables.

**Vegetables** may be prepared as a broth of boiled vegetables, fresh-cut vegetables cooked by steaming, stewing, or stir-frying or as freshly extracted raw vegetable juice. For seasoning spices such as ginger, cumin, fennel, pepper, and turmeric help increase metabolism.

**Raw juice** retains all of the most active enzymes from the vegetables, and can be made from any combination of the following: carrots, beetroot, broccoli, apples, celery, parsley, parsnips, wheat-grass juice.

**Fruits:** The best choices for fruits are semi-sweet fruits from temperate climates such as apples, pears, watermelons, black cherries, and black grapes. Tropical fruits, such as mangoes, pineapples, and bananas have a very high sugar content and tend to overheat the system. The exception is papaya.

**Water:** Drink 2-3 litres per day of pure, preferably alkaline water to flush away the large amounts of acids and other toxic wastes that the detox process empties from the body.

Sipping hot water with lemon is a good idea, and sage tea is excellent too.

**Exercise:** A daily asana and pranayama practice is a must! During detox, yoga can aid the body in the detoxification process by encouraging lymph drainage and increasing blood flow, thus facilitating the elimination of metabolic toxins through the excretory pathways of the body.

like the liver, kidney, skin and lungs. Practice in conjunction with slow, deep, rhythmic breathing that fully engages the diaphragm. The combination of slow stretching and loosening drives blood and lymph through the body like a strong pump.

I recommend a combination of twists, backbends, and supported shoulder stands, which help to drain lymph from the legs. Twists increase peristalsis and clear stagnation, while Ardha Matsyendrasana increases agni (digestive fire) and helps to send blood through the liver. Follow your asana practice with energising pranayama practices like Bhastrika and Kapalabhati. Deep diaphragmatic breathing saturates the bloodstream with fresh supplies of oxygen, while purging it of carbon dioxide, thus accelerating the detox process.

**Massage:** The deep pressure of massage stimulates various vital points along the nadis and dislodges toxic deposits in the tissues. The massaging action scatters the released toxins and facilitates their drainage through the blood and lymph. Always drink at least one or two large glasses of pure alkaline water immediately following a therapeutic massage!

**Walking and swimming:** Try fitting in 20 minutes of walking during the week into your usual routine. Build this up to 45 minutes during the week. This can be taken in the form of 3 short 15-minute walks. Swimming is also excellent.

**Meditation** helps to bring a balance of mind, body and spirit that aids the process of detoxification of both mind and body. True detoxification is multifaceted; it means not just isolating the

body but also taking your mental and emotional state into account.

**Supplements:** Psyllium seed or Psyllium husk is by far the most effective way of dredging the bowels of impacted faeces, mucoid plaque and putrefied food residues that have festered there for years. The Psyllium sweeps like a broom through the entire digestive tract and speeds up the entire detox process. One or two doses a day on an empty stomach will be sufficient.

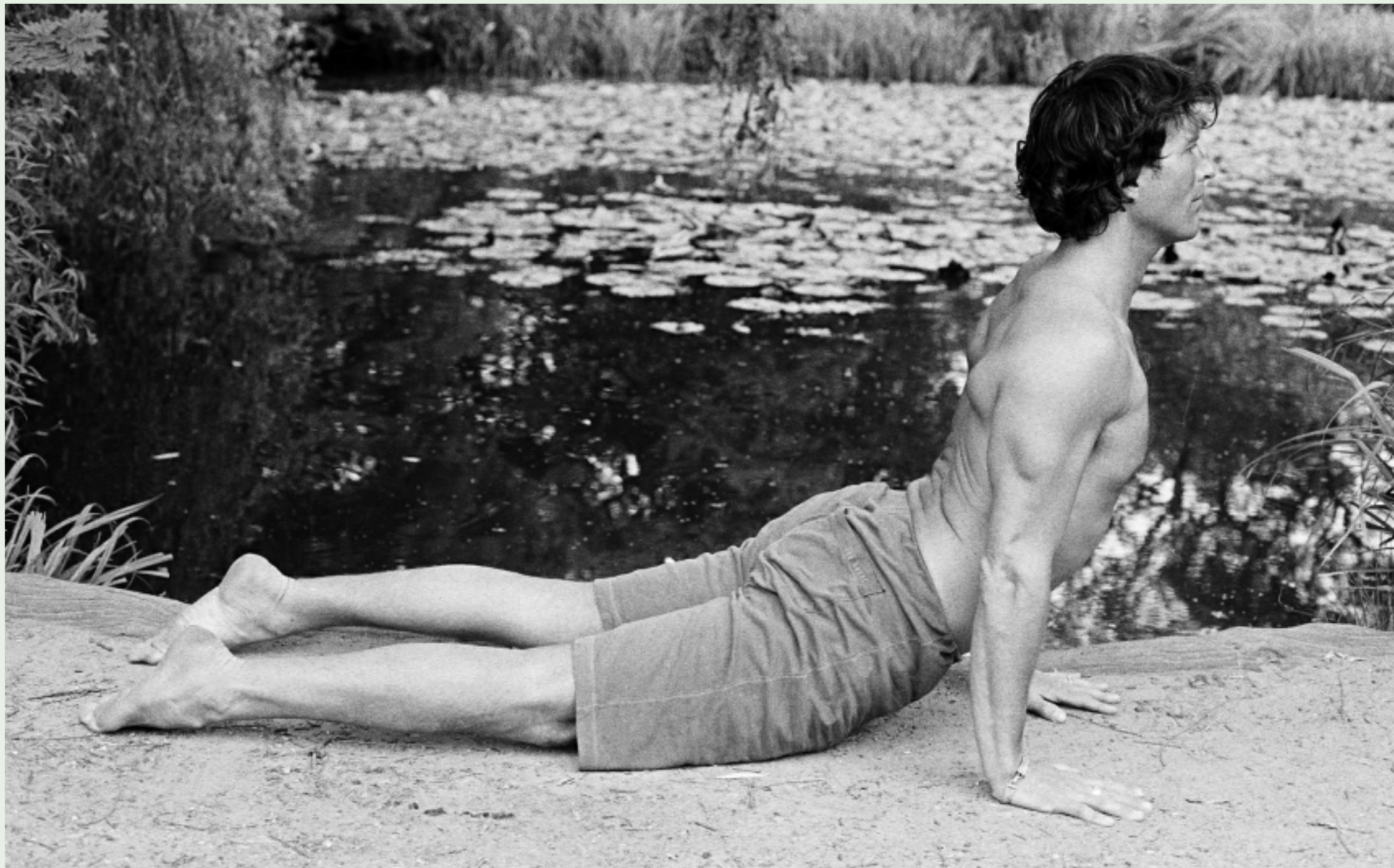
**Lactobacteria:** These are the so called "friendly" flora of the bowels. Psyllium does the job of dredging, and *acidopholus bifidus* does the job of reintroducing beneficial lactobacteria back into the intestines.

**Body brushing and steaming:** Skin is the largest organ in

the human body. Skin brushing assists the lymph system to cleanse itself of the toxins that collect below the skin. Use a natural fibre brush with a long handle – remember to skin brush towards the heart!

The steam and heat help to promote the excretion of toxins through the skin. If you do not have access to a steam room, take a hot bath, add some of your favourite essential oil or some mineral salts, lie back and relax!

**Neti pot:** Using a neti pot can alleviate sneezing, a runny nose and itching eyes. A neti counters nasal congestion, sinus allergies, headaches and other health problems. Users report sharpened mental and sensory acuity, increased breathing capacity and more vitality.



For most people, following a detox programme will be perhaps the most powerfully purifying endeavour of their life and a truly life-changing experience. On a physical level, when the blood and tissues of the body have been purged of poisons, degeneration is arrested, germs cannot attack, and the body's natural healing mechanisms repair the damage and restore optimal health to the whole system. The effects on other levels of our being are even more profound. Our mental faculties generally improve greatly. Emotionally we are able to let go of a huge amount of baggage as we let go of its physical counterpart. Our energetic and pranic levels change and we encourage and attract greater positivity into our lives.

Two 7-12 day detoxes a year are recommended, while taking care of your diet in between. Almost anyone is capable of completing a seven day/twelve day fast, but for those who have never tried it, a few three-day mini fasts may be tried first as a warm-up. A mini-fast is a good way of working your way up to a full seven-day fast, as well as being an excellent form of maintenance between longer therapeutic fasts. I fast for one day every week, taking nothing but pure alkaline water. This gives the digestive system a rest. And allows the body a brief rest to restore and rejuvenate.

*Yoga teacher Chris James is a sought-after name on the international yoga circuit and regularly contributes to a variety of health and fitness pages in national newspapers and magazines. He has been practising for 12 years and specialises in teaching Yoga and remedial yoga therapy across the world. Certified as a teacher by the British Wheel of Yoga, Chris studied in Rishikesh, and at the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram in Chennai, India.*

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