

WEEK 3

Overcoming Stress and Toxicity



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WELCOME!

Hi! Welcome to Week 3, where we're going to look closer at how our lifestyle affects the things that we eat, specifically how stress and fatigue play a role in our eating habits. It's no coincidence that as people report higher levels of stress, they're also more likely to binge-eat or use food as a crutch.

Similarly, this excess stress affects how we sleep (or, more accurately, don't sleep!). Since sleep is when our bodies recharge, rejuvenate, and heal, missing out on sleep also affects our ability to focus and function throughout the day.

Sleep can be disrupted anyway when we first ditch the booze, so anything that helps will be welcome. So, this week, we're going to tackle these issues and focus on bringing peace and calm into our lives so we can reduce the stress, get better sleep, and give our bodies and minds a chance to recover!

Let's dive in!

STRESS AND TOXICITY

Stress is a leading cause of chronic toxic overload. When you are under stress, your body releases cortisol to trigger a "fight or flight" reaction. This is fine when you're in direct danger (called "acute stress"), but if you're stressed about work and other long-term issues, ("chronic stress"), your body is continually sending out cortisol. This leads to wear on the adrenal glands, excess glucose, and, a heightened immune response in the form of feeling sluggish. Lack of sleep often leads to elevated stress levels, so chronic sleep deprivation directly ties into chronic toxic overload.

In addition to the direct link of stress and fatigue with an accumulation of toxins in your body, studies show that increased stress and fatigue are directly linked to sugar cravings and overeating. For example, when you're tired during the day, your body is screaming for a pick-me-up, so you grab a sugary snack like a candy bar which gives you a fast burst of energy, followed by a crash. Also, sugar releases serotonin, the 'feel good' neurotransmitter which can relieve stress.

While leaving a stressful job may not be feasible and you don't want to dull your stress with sugar and snacks, here are some helpful tips to reduce stress and support healthy sleep habits so you can combat cravings and flush out excess toxins.

FOR HEALTHY, RESTFUL SLEEP

- Go to bed at the same time each night, at least eight hours before you need to wake up in the morning.
- One hour before you go to bed, turn off electronics. Use this time to read, take a soothing bath, write in a journal, or enjoy other calming activities.
- Keep the room temperature cool and completely dark.
- Diffuse lavender essential oil or try rubbing a few drops of diluted lavender on your temples to promote calm and rest.
- Eliminate clutter and mess from your bedroom. Consider it a "sacred" space made for relaxation, sleep, and peace.

TIPS TO REDUCE AND ELIMINATE STRESS

- Leave work at work - the emails and phone calls can wait until tomorrow! Being constantly tied to work leads to burnout and exhaustion, which makes you less effective over time. Use your time away from work to unwind, refresh your mind, and go in the next day ready to tackle your to-do list.
- Practice mindfulness and being present. Focus your full attention on what you're doing at the time, whether that means doing work without stopping to check your email or enjoying a meal with your family without the TV in the background. Eliminate the distractions and focus on the now.
- Get fresh air daily, whether it's a walk around the block or even just sitting outside and feeling the breeze, time spent in nature is known to lower stress levels
- Practice deep breathing exercises! Dr. Andrew Weil's 4-7-8 method is popular, Do this in the evening before bed or even during a stressful moment during the day to bring down stress and clear your mind.

We have several simple audio visualizations in the Mindset Buzz section of The Sober Club. Try telling yourself before you sleep: *'I will sleep well and wake refreshed!'*

Take care of your body with nourishing food and rest, and your body will take care of you by flushing toxins that are holding you back from a healthy, energized life!

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

I understand that shifting to a toxin free lifestyle is a major shift! But like any successful change, with the right planning, success is much more likely! Here are some tips to help you make lifestyle changes sustainable, stress-free, and enjoyable!

GET MOVING

Exercise is super important for cleansing. Including consistent exercise in your daily routine will reap powerful dividends regarding your health.

At a minimum, get out and briskly walk for 30 minutes each day to start. If you haven't tried it before, some yoga stretches can be amazing. Simple Pilate's exercises can be good for back pain and posture too. I love Dance and find moving to music helps me shake off a bad mood (literally)

Despite the many benefits of exercise, creating an exercise routine that is not best for your health condition can have detrimental effects, so choose what works for you.

Please be sure to consult your physician and follow their instructions regarding the frequency and intensity of the physical activity best for you and your health.

PLAN MEALS & BATCH COOK

Take 30 minutes each week to plan your meals and make your grocery list. This helps tremendously to avoid a "what to eat" breakdown.

I also highly recommend batch cooking in bulk as often as you can. Even something as simple as making a double batch of whatever dinner is and then freezing the second meal for another time. Creating an arsenal of meals in your freezer will take the stress out of "what's for dinner"!

BEWARE OF CHEMICALS

The world we live in today is inundated with hormone-disrupting chemicals. Thousands more than our ancestors were exposed to just a hundred years ago.

When your body is under chronic stress conditions, it's particularly vulnerable to the negative influence of these chemicals. Do your best to avoid plastics, pesticides, PCBs, dioxins, flame-retardants, PFOA (used in Teflon and some wrappers), heavy metals like mercury, and triclosan (found in many antibacterial products).

The average person's detoxification pathways are not performing optimally. This means that gentle detoxification and avoiding harmful chemicals is especially important. Read my books *Imperfectly Natural Home* and *Look Great Naturally* without ditching the lipstick for more on sustainable solutions.

SHOP DIFFERENTLY

Shop the outer edge of the supermarkets. This is where you are most likely to find nourishing whole foods - vegetables, fruits, meats. The inner aisles are typically filled with more processed foods. Don't forget to support independent health food stores and food markets too.

Do your research and find local farms, farmer's market, and local food co-operatives in your area. You know the phrase. Think Global – Act Local.

Get to know your farmer. Often a farmer or local food producer may use organic farming methods but has not gone through the process of becoming certified organic, which can be lengthy and expensive. Politely ask questions about how they produce their crops and raise their animals. You may be surprised by how easy it is to get locally grown food. And the more local your food, the more nutrient dense it will be.

SUCCESS WITH THE CLEAN EATING PROTOCOL USING THE 80-20 RULE

The food we eat is often at the root of toxic overload. Processed foods, sugar, gluten, and dairy are so hard for our bodies to process that they damage our gut health and cause our immune systems to go into overdrive. This leads to the chronic pain, digestive problems, skin irritations, and fatigue that make it so hard to just make it through the day.

A sluggish immune system is a serious health concern that can even lead to more severe health problems, including autoimmune disorders, heart disease, and cancer, so it's important to do everything we can to reverse the damage of chronic toxic overload.

The protocols you're going to receive are aimed at helping your body cleanse and overcome the debilitating symptoms, fatigue, and excess weight that comes with it. When you look through your protocol, you'll see that the Clean Eating Protocol removes gluten and dairy from your diet completely and is made up only of clean eating options - gluten-free whole grains like brown rice and quinoa, unprocessed fruits and vegetables, lean, clean meats, and healthy fats.

Your first reaction may be “None of the ‘good stuff’ is allowed!” and that’s natural! You may feel completely overwhelmed at the idea of trying to follow a strict protocol and are already thinking you won’t be able to do it.

Take a deep breath. You’ve got this, I’m going to teach you the secret (okay, well-known scientific principle!) to being successful on the clean eating Protocol.

Of course I love this, my books and websites fall under the title ‘Imperfectly Natural’ - I don’t get it all right, you probably won’t either!

WHAT IS THE 80-20 FLEXIBILITY?

I want you to apply 80-20 Flexibility to how you eat on the clean eating Protocol. Don’t worry, this is simple to follow, and it’s actually more of a guideline, but all this means is you want to follow the clean eating guidelines 80 percent of the time, and the other 20 percent of the time, you can indulge in some of your favourite foods, still avoiding processed foods and processed sugar when and where you can. If you’re a maths fan, break it down like this. If you eat 21 meals (assuming three meals a day) and 14 snacks (two a day) a week, make sure 17 meals and 11 snacks follow your protocols. Maybe you prefer to relax on the weekends and eat clean throughout the week.

If you’re following the flexibility, you’ll see and feel the benefits of following the protocols!

MAINTAINING STRUCTURE WITH 80-20 FLEXIBILITY

It’s important to note that you want to eat moderately, no matter if you’re eating a clean meal or not. While indulging sometimes is normal and even good for us, it’s important to not overindulge because it will undo much of the work of the other 80 percent of your meals. For example, you want to indulge in ice cream (who doesn’t?). Instead of eating an carton of the stuff, check out Paleo-friendly desserts that use honey, banana, and applesauce as natural sweeteners, or even try a small scoop of ice cream as a treat and add fresh blueberries and strawberries to fill up your bowl a bit more.

Or if you are eating out, split an order with your partner or friend or order a lunch-sized portion.

WHY DOES 80-20 FLEXIBILITY WORK?

It's no secret that diets don't work. Restrictive eating plans, 100 percent elimination diets, and similarly structured protocols are not feasible for most people and are nearly impossible to stick with for the long term. Having flexibility prevents you from feeling deprived and looking at every food as "good or bad" or "allowed or forbidden" because what happens when a food is labeled forbidden?

It becomes ALL you think about!

Instead, no foods are forbidden, and when you enjoy a bowl of pasta or a dish of ice cream, that's all there is to it. You can enjoy foods you love, and there's not a thing wrong with that! But by following a clean eating plan most of the time will ensure that your body is able to cleanse and help you form healthy eating habits.

Even better, by following this rule, you don't have to worry about calorie counting, feeling guilty or deprived, or stressing out or getting overwhelmed by constantly being "on your diet."

So, remember, following a clean eating plan doesn't mean you'll never eat bread again (though there are plenty of delicious, gluten-free varieties!) or never eat a slice of cake. It's just about balancing your life toward nourishing and healing your body with clean, nutritious foods and indulging occasionally in a bit of the fun stuff.

Don't forget we can focus not on what we 'can't' have, but what we can enjoy adding in. Focus on the amazing fuel we are giving our bodies to help us with energy, vitality and feeling great.

WEEK 3 HOMEWORK

1. Stick with your meal planning and enjoying your Clean Foods Plate!
2. Select three meals this week to “batch cook” - that means doubling a recipe and freezing half of it to make an easy meal you can just pop in the oven later.

Include 30 minutes of exercise each day - this could be a brisk walk, a workout video, or joining a class. Try and discover what you love!

	Exercise	Duration
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

3. What's the biggest cause of stress in your life? What are three ways you can reduce or eliminate this stress?

Stress _____

Elimination strategy 1: _____

Elimination strategy 2: _____

Elimination strategy 3: _____

4. Select two to three things to improve your sleep this week!

Don't forget to come into the community, where you can share your victories! Your 'wins' however small may inspire others to their own success, so be sure to share them in a safe, welcoming place!

As always, reach out to me if you hit any obstacles or start feeling overwhelmed. You are NOT going through this journey alone!

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this document is being provided to you for informational purposes based on my personal knowledge, opinions, and experience as a holistic health coach only. It is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat, or heal disease nor replace medical advice or instruction from a licensed professional.

I am not a medical doctor and make no claim to specialized medical training. Please consult your doctor if you have any questions regarding the suggestions made in this content, and make your own well-informed decisions based on what is best for your physical needs.

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