

RECHARGE YOUR MIND, BODY & SPIRIT



Improve your health, lose weight and increase your inner peace in 2013 with **our easy-to-follow plan** designed to help you overcome bad habits and replace them with happy, healthy ones

BY GINA ROBERTS-GREY

Detox Key | 7 Day | 21 Day | 3 Month

MIND + SPIRIT

ONCE THE CONFETTI falls and the champagne is sipped, it's time to look ahead to the New Year and set a goal to detox your life. Why? Because a whole lot of "little things" may be holding you back from happiness, health and success. It's time to make 2013 a Year of You!

No matter your age or current health habits, you can reverse years of poor lifestyle choices by making just a few important changes on your way to becoming the best you can be. Follow the key at the top of the page and look for the corresponding dots after every tip to build your own 7-, 21- or 90-day plan. Ready, set, let's get started.

REVIVE MENTALLY

Mental exhaustion can lead to stress, which contributes to the formation of bad habits like watching television instead of watching what you eat.

To eliminate brain strain, rethink how you prioritize your day, says Jason Selk, Ed.D., best-selling author of *Executive Toughness: The Mental-Training Program to Increase Your Leadership Performance* (McGraw-Hill). "Crossing off the most important to-dos from your list first thing in the morning helps to create positive momentum," he says. Wake up 30 minutes earlier than normal to

identify your three most important tasks for the day, then knock them out one by one rather than expending the energy worrying or procrastinating, says Selk. "Getting that mental monkey off your back will set you up for a day filled with high performance and success," he says.

FORCE YOURSELF

TO FOCUS No matter how convinced you are that simultaneously cooking dinner, checking your child's homework and reading your e-mail enables you to get more done in an hour, Selk says multitasking is actually counterproductive. "The mind can only truly focus >

BUILD SOME MENTAL MUSCLE

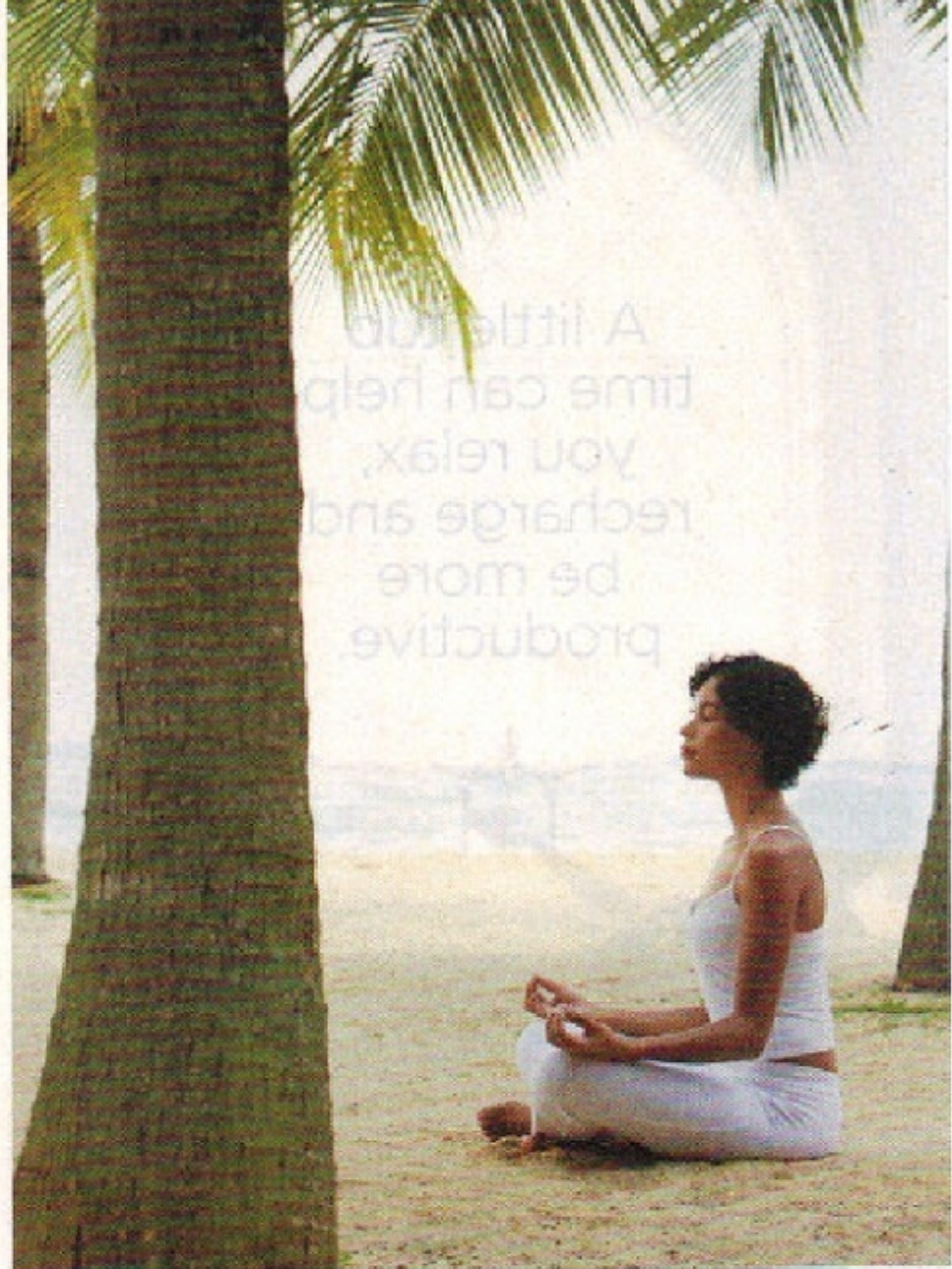
Just like working your biceps, you can strengthen your mind to develop mental toughness, focus and clarity, says Selk. "This daily 100-second mental workout is an incredibly powerful tool that will help you to execute at a higher level consistently," he says. **Step 1:** Inhale for a count of six, hold your breath for a count of two and then exhale for a count of seven. This technique promotes tranquility, controls your heart rate and allows you to concentrate.

Step 2: State who you are as if you'd already achieved your goal. For instance, say "I am confident and I thrive on pressure. I am the most focused and successful accountant in the country."

Step 3: Spend 60 seconds remembering three things done well in the previous 24 hours and then imagining three things you are going to do well in the upcoming day.

Step 4: Repeat Step 2 to drive home your self-image of success.

Step 5: Repeat Step 1 to remind yourself of the feeling of being calm and in control.



A little tub
time can help
you relax,
recharge and
be more
productive.

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CREATE A ROAD MAP

Motivational speaker and author Lisa Nichols says before you start remaking your life, you first need to get a clear picture of where you are now. "To get the life you want, you first have to look at the parts of your life that don't match your intention," says Nichols. She suggests doing the following:

1. Label four sheets of paper "Relationship," "Health and Wellness," "Business and Finances" and "Spirituality and Faith." Write down anything about those areas you don't love, whether it's a lack of a retirement account or poor communication with a loved one. Identify the two things on each list that are the most important to you, then get to work on drawing up the steps that will help you achieve these goals.
2. Enlist the help of a support buddy to hold you accountable for taking the steps toward your goals—like starting a 401(k). Explain that you don't need a babysitter but you would like her to check in once or twice a week. "Tell her that no matter what, she shouldn't let you off the hook," says Nichols.
3. Set dates during the next three months to accomplish each goal. And be specific down to the day and time—the clearer the target, the easier it is to hit. "Write on your calendar that by 5 P.M. on the chosen day, you will have done..." says Nichols.
4. Remember to tell the world about your progress and celebrate each milestone. "Tell your buddy, write yourself a note of congrats, start your FB post, 'Help celebrate me for...,'" Nichols suggests.

on one task at any moment," he says. Hone your concentration skills by addressing one task at a time and allowing yourself to move on to the next job only when it's completed or you're waiting on a response (a call or an e-mail) from another person.

RECHARGE Late nights and long hours can leave you mentally drained, says Selk. To function at peak potential, allow at least one day of fun or rest for every seven-day cycle. Get a massage, play with your kids, have a catch-up lunch with your girlfriends or just take a long soak in a warm bath. "You'll find yourself more productive and less mentally exhausted," says Selk.

STARE DOWN YOUR PAIN Clear out emotional clutter by dedicating a day to tackle all your "why" questions. Write down—in pencil—the "Why did I blow money?" or "Why did he cheat on me?" questions that are weighing you down. "Ask those hard questions, the ones that are so difficult to think about that you pretend they're not there," says Lisa Nichols, a life coach and best-selling author of *No Matter What!* (Grand Central). If tears start flowing, let them. "Don't stop if it gets uncomfortable; this is an emotional cleanse. Remember that beyond the pain is the good, clean feeling." Once you've run out of whys, you've completed your emotional marathon. And

like after any good run, Nichols says, it's time to hit the showers. "Imagine the cascading water is washing away the emotional clutter," she says. "Imagine yourself stepping into the shower a victim of your whys but emerging a victor."

Afterward, look over your why list again, this time armed with a red pen, and write the healthiest, most honest answer you

can think of to each question. For instance, says Nichols, the response to "Why did I gain weight?" could be "I was hurting, scared and lonely and chose food for comfort." Once you have all your answers, Nichols says to erase the questions you wrote in pencil. "Now you're left with the truth and an emotionally clutter-free spirit," she says.

HEALTH + FITNESS

Facing up
to what's holding
you back
will leave you
with an
emotionally
uncluttered spirit.

HEALTH + FITNESS

NOT SURE IF YOUR fitness routine is working? Look at how your clothes fit, says Dolvett Quince, resident fitness guru on NBC's hit show *The Biggest Loser*. Do you feel discouraged because your favorite outfit is tight? It's

too much the first week. Aim to do at least three sets of eight repetitions for any exercise you perform.

DON'T JUST SIT THERE "Use the couch as a tool," says Quince. "Stand up, sit

ing up with your favorite show is tweeting (OMG! #Scandal), make your TV time work better for you. Keep a ten-pound dumbbell next to the sofa and do biceps curls or other arm-toning exercises during commercial breaks, says Quince. Or do squats by holding your arms out in front of you, with feet hip distance apart and your back straight, and bending at the knee. ●●

MAKE YOUR COMMUTE MATTER Develop your core anywhere—while you're on the train or in your car waiting at a light—by tightening your abdominal muscles for five to ten seconds and then releasing them. "These isolation movements will tone your stomach," says Quince. Similarly, you can firm up your butt. Do both moves 10 to 20 times a day. ●●

ADD CARDIO Build on all those exercises you squeezed into your day and start carving out major time to work out. Turn up the intensity and frequency of your workouts by including aerobic exercises designed to get your heart pumping: Power-walk, go for a run, take a spinning class or hit the elliptical machine at the gym. The goal is to keep your heart rate at 120 beats per minute. You can buy a heart rate monitor for about \$30 to help you achieve your goal. Aim to exercise for at least a half hour three to four days a week. The rest of the time you should be doing your "little things," like squats and biceps curls. Your reward, says Quince, could be ditching one

dress or pant size and enjoying a natural high thanks to all those endorphins, your body's naturally occurring mood boosters produced when exercising. ●●

PRETEND TO BE A PLANK At the start and end of your day lie face down with your forearms shoulder width apart, legs straight out. Rise onto only your forearms and the tips of your toes, holding your body flat and level. Hold this position for as long as you can; even a few seconds in the beginning. Work up to adding five or six seconds every few days—until you can hold it for a minute. ●●

ACTIVATE YOUR SOCIAL LIFE Meet the girls after work for a hip-hop dance, yoga or Zumba class. "Anything that makes it fun," says Quince, "Remember, if you're not moving, you're not losing." Too shy? Harness up your dog when you get home from work and go on a long, brisk walk so you both can stretch your legs and move. ●

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL In addition to working with weights and doing calisthenics, increase your cardio activity to a minimum of 45 minutes, every day. Quince says 90 minutes is even better. You want to keep you heart rate in the fat-burning zone (120 to 140 beats per minute) to build the muscle you need to burn fat. "Body confusion is the best way to see results. You should never do the same thing over and over again," says Quince. Instead of going to Pilates or yoga 3 times a week, mix it up. Go to Pilates one day, the gym

Simple exercises, like biceps curls, when done consistently, can help get you back on the fitness track.

time to implement better habits, says Quince.

Begin your detox by avoiding the temptation to overdo, particularly if you've spent more time lounging than lunging. And even if you've been somewhat active, you don't want to push it by doing

right back down, then stand up again. Time yourself and see how many reps you can do in a minute, then try to beat that time." ●

COUNT ON COMMERCIALS If the most activity you engage in while catch-

the next (for weight training), try a spin class the next day and yoga the fourth. "Do different things in a different order every week," he says. Quince says three months is enough time to flatten your

stomach, improve the quality of your sleep, send stress packing and boost up that sagging butt. "I've seen people transform their entire physique in 90 days," says Quince. ●

NUTRITION

DETOXING YOUR DIET IS a great way to kick off the New Year, particularly after a holiday season filled with too many sweets, treats and cocktails. Koya Webb, a Los

Angeles holistic health and wellness expert known as The Detox Diva, says cleaning up one's diet and paying more attention to what we put in our bodies has big payoffs. "Adding



Fresh fruit, like oranges, are a healthy snack option.

fruits and vegetables in place of starches and sugary treats, can put some spring in your step," she says. "It's not uncommon for people to say they wake up in the morning

ready to jump out of bed because they have so much energy."

BREAK UP WITH CAFFEINE "Too much caffeine can lead to disturbed sleep and even insomnia," says Webb. That can erase all your hard work, according to a study from the Mayo Clinic, which says getting less than six and a half hours of sleep a night can lead to consuming as many as 500 excess calories during the day. That doesn't mean you have to ditch coffee or tea altogether—just stick to decaf. To avoid headaches associated with a sudden lack of caffeine, instead of going cold turkey, wean yourself off by cutting your caffeine intake by one half every day until you're caffeine-free. ● >

SEVEN-DAY DIET DETOX JUMP-START

A week is the perfect amount of time to identify unhealthy eating habits, says Webb. It puts you on the path to losing weight, increasing energy, improving your skin and relieving stress. "You can lose two pounds or more in a week and experience better bowel movements once you rid yourself of toxins," she says.

BASIC PLAN

- Start in your kitchen. Clean out your pantry, fridge and cabinets, and toss—or better yet donate to the local food pantry if the items are unopened—anything that's not from the earth (fruits, veggies) or that contains preservatives.
- Swap soda for water with freshly squeezed lemon. Drink a gallon a day to flush out your system.
- Read the label. A good rule of thumb is that if you can't pronounce an ingredient, then it doesn't belong in your kitchen, much less your body. Some ingredients to avoid include high fructose corn syrup, MSG (monosodium glutamate) and artificial flavors and colors.
- Replace table salt with sea salt. Sea salt is less processed, so it isn't packed with additives, making it a healthy alternative.

STRICT 7-DAY OPTION

Webb says this fruitfest is an easy and healthy, deep-cleansing option:

Prebreakfast: 8-to-16-ounce glass of room temperature water with the juice of half a fresh lemon

Breakfast: A bowl of fresh berries and a glass of fresh-squeezed fruit juice

Morning Snack: Banana and ¼ cup of watermelon

Lunch: Fruit salad of 2 cups of mixed fruits

Afternoon Snack: Orange or apple and a green juice made with 2 parts fruit and 1 part green vegetables such as kale and spinach

Dinner: Fruit salad of 2 cups of mixed fruits, a banana and a glass of fresh-squeezed fruit juice

Drink: 4 to 6 additional glasses of water with freshly squeezed lemon to stay hydrated ●



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TRADE IN YOUR USUAL BREAKFAST Instead of cereal or a muffin, whip up a fresh fruit smoothie once or twice a week. "Fruits have the fiber and nutrients you need for good clean energy," says Webb. They're also packed with antioxidants, which protect against free radicals and can help lower your chances of cancer. ●●

SWAP OUT SNACKS Pack an apple and a handful of almonds and take them to work so you aren't getting tempted to hit up the snack machine. The fiber in the apple is good for your digestive system, and the American Heart Association recently certified almonds with its signature Heart-Check mark to signify that they are a heart-healthy food. ●●

Plus, they're packed with protein, which helps keep your stomach from grumbling and you from overeating at lunchtime. ●●

GO HARD-CORE Dedicate one month to cutting out all foods that contain gluten. "Eliminate foods with wheat, barley and rye to improve your digestive process and help maintain a healthy weight," says Webb. Then move on to incorporating a vegan diet that slowly shifts to a raw vegan diet, meaning no animal products and no food cooked above 115°F. This type of detox will eventually become a lifestyle, says Webb. ●

BE REALISTIC No matter how dedicated you are, sometimes life gets in the way. Things like a

DRINK UP You'll need lots of water to help flush out your system.

Stay well hydrated. You should drink half your body weight in ounces of spring water, Webb advises. "For example, a person weighing 160 pounds would drink 80 ounces," says Webb. "If you're not eliminating at least twice a day, drink distilled water for three days and then switch back to spring water."

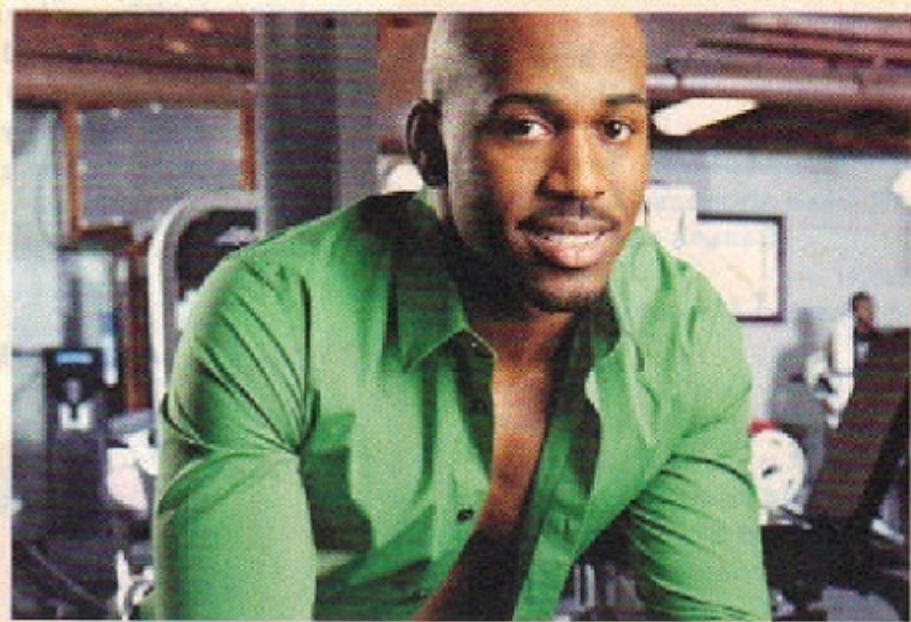


family birthday party, menstrual cravings or an overwhelming urge for a salty snack can derail the best of intentions. If that happens, don't beat yourself up. Chalk it up to a

"cheat day" and get right back on the detox bandwagon. ●●●□

Gina Roberts-Grey is a health and psychology writer in upstate New York.

THE EXPERTS



DOLSETT QUINCE owns the Body Sculptor training studio in Atlanta and is a resident fitness guru on NBC's hit show *The Biggest Loser*.



KOYA WEBB is a holistic health and wellness expert, motivational speaker and lifestyle consultant based in Marina del Rey, California.



LISA NICHOLS is a life coach, a motivational speaker specializing in spiritual development and the author of *No Matter What!* (Grand Central).



JASON SELK, Ed.D., is the author of *Executive Toughness* (McGraw-Hill) and former director of mental training for two-time World Series Champions the St. Louis Cardinals.

DIABETES AND DIET

Eating one cup of beans or lentils every day may help people with type 2 diabetes control their blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol. Canadian researchers had one group of diabetics increase its intake of whole grains and fiber, and had another up its daily intake of beans. Three months later the bean-eating group had lowered its ten-year risk of cardiovascular disease by a statistically significant 0.8 percent.



STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT

A study of 110 college students, conducted at San Francisco State University, found that those who walked with a slouch reported lower energy levels and increased feelings of depression. When asked to skip by lifting the opposite arm and leg, these same students reported feeling happier, positive and more energetic. "By changing posture, you can change your brain chemistry," says Erik Peper, Ph.D., lead author of the study.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

ESSENCE talked exclusively with U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius about the benefits of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), due to become reality in the next two years.

Q How will women's health coverage improve?

A: Before the ACA went into effect, women not only could be charged more for health insurance but they were paying hundreds of dollars out of pocket for services like gestational diabetes screening for pregnant women, lactation help and support, domestic violence screening and a range of mental health services that their plans didn't cover.

With ACA, plans will also cover HIV and HPV screenings; contraception will be available without copays; and maternity care, which many plans on the market didn't include, will be covered.

Q What about prescription costs?

A: Starting January 2014, insurance plans will no longer be able to be sold without also including prescription coverage. The decision about whether every drug is covered for every person will still be on a plan-by-plan basis, but you will at least be able to see if the plan you're signing up for covers the medications you need.

Q What part of ACA are you most proud of?

A: The opportunity for about 30 million additional folks to get health insurance. It's something we've talked about in this country. I think that's a big step forward. —S.B.


HEALTH NEWS

BY SHARON BOONE

A FASTER ROUTE TO FITNESS

Preliminary research at Colorado State University found that exercise-bike riders who did a 25-minute sprint interval workout, in which they alternated pedaling as hard as they could for 30 seconds and pedaling without resistance for four minutes, burned 200 more calories a day. Don't have access to an exercise bike? Alternate sprinting up and walking down a hill. The researchers believe this can have big implications for the way we approach working out.



 Read more of our discussion with Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on our tablet edition.