

hydrate your body

Our bodies are made up of mainly water... something hard to comprehend at times. Lesley Pierce explains why our pure water intake is as important as our diet. So, pour yourself a glass of filtered water and read on...

The whole philosophy of Nutritional Healing & Naturopathy is based on the fact that, as human beings, we all have an innate healing ability within us! If we give our bodies what they need, and take away the things they don't, then these amazing machines will know how to heal themselves.

One of the essential needs of the human body is hydration. Why? Put simply, human beings are made of water! Every cell in our body is made up of 70% water; in the central nervous system, comprising the brain and spinal cord, it's more like 85%. Furthermore, all the body's nutrients are transported to our cells in water. We are talking about clean, pure water, with nothing in it – no nasty chemicals, additives, teabags or hops! Unfortunately, water straight from the tap isn't recommended – unless you are lucky enough to have a natural spring at the back of your house! (www.findspring.com lists locations of natural springs around the world). The chemicals in tap water, predominantly chlorine, are added to kill bacteria, but they have a detrimental effect on the good, healthy bacteria in our intestines. Edward Bach (creator of Bach Flower Remedies) once said, 'If you want to change someone's personality, then change their bowel flora!' I think this gives us some idea of their importance.

pure is more

Naturally, it is far better to drink tap water than to abstain completely, and there are many easy ways to improve the quality of tap water. To remove the chlorine, water can be boiled and then stored in a glass container, with a couple of clear quartz crystals to energise it. There are many water filters on offer, ranging from a basic filter jug to the installation of a whole house system. It is best to check the pH value of the water before making plans to invest – some filter systems can be efficient at removing the 'rubbish' from the water, but run the risk of stripping out some of the water's natural minerals, which results in acidic water. Bottled water may seem a simple option, but there is no escaping the environmental impact of the plastic consumption from the bottles themselves. There have also been recent reports about the risk of chemicals from the plastic leaking into the water. Glass bottles would be the answer!

The ideal temperature to drink water is body temperature. When we drink very cold water, it sits in the stomach until the body has heated it up before being able to move on, whereas when water is consumed at a slightly warmer temperature, the body is able to utilize it more quickly. Drinking water half an hour before eating helps to prepare the mucosal lining of the digestive system, which protects the stomach from very acidic conditions. It also means that there is some 'spare' water to deal with food

digestion, a process that needs a great deal of water. However, drinking water with meals actually dilutes the digestive juices, which is why drinking a short time before, or after, a meal is recommended. Water is also needed to make a bicarbonate solution required by the pancreas. This solution helps neutralise the highly acidic Chyme, a semi-fluid mass of partially digested food, which is expelled from the stomach into the small intestine. If there isn't adequate water to assist digestion, it will be taken from other places in the body. Not great to imagine water being diverted from your brain! 'Your Body's Many Cries For Water' by Dr. F. Batmanghelidj explains this well.

no desert island droughts

What our beautiful bodies need is the reassurance that there is no drought going on! In the UK, we are surrounded by a readily available supply of drinking water. If your fluid intake consists mainly of tea, coffee, sodas or alcohol, all of which have a diuretic effect, then at a cellular level, the body reacts as if in drought conditions! The solution is to sip water throughout the day, which provides our bodies with a constant supply of 'good' fluid. Those with kidney problems or heart conditions will need to increase their water intake under supervision from a health practitioner. There have been rare occasions when, tragically, someone has died from drinking too much water. A sensible amount to aim for is 4 pints a day, but no more than 7-8 pints total and no more than 1 pint per hour. And remember, if you're improving your water-drinking habits, it is always recommended to introduce changes gradually. So, raise your glass and make mine an H₂O!

Lesley Pierce teaches at The Nutritional Healing Foundation which delivers courses around the country. You can find out contact information and download their prospectus at: www.nutrihealfoundation.com.



& soak those toxins away

Anna Middleton gives us a dose of Naturopathic techniques to support a tiptop spring cleanse, and bring a warm glow to our skin.

Time for a full-body spring clean? If so, the first step is to release toxins and, crucially, ensure they leave the body efficiently. As the intention to 'de-tox' is to improve our health, we need to address the changes we can make to our diet and lifestyle to shift toxins from our cells, and how to help eliminate them without putting our bodies under duress. There are several techniques to encourage your body to cleanse itself, or to boost your system during periods of illness. Here are a few to get you started...

skin brushing

Our skin eliminates approximately 10% of our metabolic waste. Skin brushing ensures that pores are un-blocked so that elimination can take place through the skin. Skin brushing also stimulates the lymphatic system and improves the circulation of blood.

Directions: Use a natural, non-synthetic skin brush and brush in an upward direction towards the heart. Before starting, ensure the skin is dry. Begin with the soles of the feet, brushing in small strokes up both sides of the legs before working the brush along the torso to the heart. Then, starting from the hands, brush up the arms, along the neck and down towards the heart. Avoid brushing the face, as the skin is usually more sensitive.

epsom salts bath

Epsom Salts, also known as Magnesium Sulphate, are able to draw toxins from the body when absorbed through the skin, and this is best achieved by immersing yourself in a warm salt bath. The heat of the water draws the toxins to the surface of the skin, encouraging the body to sweat and detox. In addition, the salts sedate the nervous system, reduce swelling and relax muscles. They have the added benefit of softening the skin, and act as a great natural exfoliant.

Directions: Dissolve 1 kg of Epsom Salts in a warm bath, then lie back and relax for at least 20 minutes. Before getting out, lower the bath temperature with some cold water to cool down. Wrap up, ideally in breathable cotton, and hop straight into bed. Your body will sweat after this treatment, so be sure to drink plenty of water to keep yourself hydrated.

Contraindications: Do not try this if you have heart problems, high blood pressure, diabetes or are pregnant.



hot & cold showers

This technique helps to boost the lymph system and blood flow, by alternating hot and cold water to increase circulation, promote detoxification and strengthen the immune system. The process also helps transport nutrients and oxygen to other cells, and is not for the faint-hearted!

Directions: Stand under a regular, warm shower, then switch the temperature to cold for 30 seconds. Turn the temperature back to hot for 1 minute, and then back to cold for 30 seconds. Repeat this cycle at least 3 times, ending with cold water.

For further details about naturopathic techniques & holistic nutrition, go to Anna's website – www.annamiddleton.com