

Asset HealthTalk

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know



Fad-Free Ways to Bounce Back After the Holidays

If you overindulged over the past couple months, you're not alone. But now that 2017 has officially begun, it's time to get back on track and leave unhealthy habits behind. Here are five ways to show your body some post-holiday love.

1 Get quality rest. Even though the holidays seem like the best time to catch up on valuable Zzzs, we know that's not always a reality. See if you can get to bed a little earlier to make quality rest your top priority now that the holidays have passed. There are many benefits to getting enough quality sleep, such as restoring your body's energy, repairing muscles and triggering the release of hormones that affect growth and appetite.

2 Schedule some "me-time." Taking time to connect with yourself, de-stressing and doing something you enjoy are important parts of functioning at your best.

Here are a few ideas to try solo:

- Escape with a book.
- Get a massage.
- Take a walk in the evening to stargaze. (Be sure to bundle up!)
- Listen to soothing music.
- Try a yoga class (or another exercise you enjoy).
- Meditate.
- Prepare your favorite healthy meal.
- Take time for a hobby or other creative practice.

3 Let it go. It is common for people to feel guilt after overindulging. But there's no use in beating yourself up. Instead, use this experience as a learning opportunity. Acknowledge that you're taking steps in the right direction – toward a happier, healthier you!

4 Have fun with seasonal activities. Even if we exercise, catch up on sleep, and eat well during the holidays, sometimes the aftermath of the holidays alone can leave us feeling like we need to hit the refresh button. See if you can find a few seasonal activities to celebrate winter apart from the holidays. If the temperature is safe and you feel like bundling up, work up a sweat in the great outdoors by:

- Taking a walk with a friend (or your dog)
- Shoveling snow (or other yard work)
- Participating in a charity 5k
- Trying a new winter activity, such as snowshoeing, sledding, skiing, snowboarding, snow flag football or soccer, ice hockey, or ice-skating

5 Take a break from unhealthy food. Now that the feasts have ended, give your digestive system a break by eating healthier options. Here are some ideas to get started: try broth-based soups, smoothies and other easily digestible foods. Consider adding in dark leafy greens (like kale or spinach) to your smoothies or raw or steamed veggies as a side with your meals.



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Popular detox diets can be a safe and effective way to cleanse your body and support your healthy lifestyle.

- A. Yes
- B. Sometimes
- C. If doctor-prescribed
- D. No

Please see next page for the correct answer.

HOW TO AVOID THE BLUE LIGHT BLUES

Back in the day, evenings were categorized by darkness. The sun would dictate waking and sleeping, and people had to put some effort into illuminating their surroundings. Today, light is available at the flip of a switch and electronics have infiltrated our evening routines. Many of us now have to make an effort to power down and divert our attention from light-emitting devices.

Blue light, which emanates from electronics, such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and other gadgets as well as energy-efficient lights, can compromise our health. It can cause eye strain, disrupt our sleep and increase our risk of diseases, such as diabetes, obesity and some cancers. This is because blue light can throw our circadian rhythms out of whack by suppressing melatonin, a chemical that regulates the body's internal clock and signals when it's time to wind down.

Not all light has the same impact on our bodies. Blue light, in particular, seems to wreak havoc on melatonin production. This doesn't mean it's bad, though. When used properly, blue wavelengths can boost our focus and mood during the day.

Now that our homes are filled with electronics that are frequently used during evening hours to watch our favorite shows, read articles or scroll through social media feeds, we need to be intentional about our light consumption.

Here are tips to keep blue light from preventing a good night's rest and compromising your overall health:

- Avoid screen time two to three hours before bed.
- Install an app on your smartphone that reduces blue wavelengths that radiate from your screen at night.
- If you insist on using an electronic device before bed and have the choice of a smartphone, tablet or laptop, use the smallest device – it will emit less blue light.

- Turn your screen brightness down at night or put your device in reading (or evening) mode.
- Keep your device at least an arm's length away.
- If you enjoy using an e-reader, use a model that isn't backlit. Or, better yet, curl up with an actual book or magazine.
- Install warm bulbs in bedside lights. There are also smart lighting systems that automatically change the quality of light that radiates depending on the time of day.
- Install blue light filter software on your computer that will adapt your computer display to match the time of day.
- If you work night shifts or use electronic devices before bedtime, consider wearing Amber-colored glasses that help block blue light.
- Get outside and soak up natural, energizing blue light during the day. Daytime exposure can boost your circadian rhythm so you sleep better at night.

Blue light isn't bad – it's vital to our biological functioning. It's all about timing. Blue light keeps us alert during the day. We simply need to be mindful about our exposure to light and keep in mind its powerful influence on our wakefulness. Quality rest is crucial to maintaining our wellbeing.

Using gadgets before bed can be detrimental to our sleep at night, and our health over time. Understanding the effects of blue light and making some intentional choices can help your body shut off when it needs to in this modern, illuminated age in which we now live.

"Blue Light Has a Dark Side," health.harvard.edu, Sept. 2, 2015.

"8 Ways to Use Your Gadgets at Night and Still Get a Good Night's Sleep," Michael Grothaus, fastcompany.com, Feb. 25, 2015.

"Blocking Blue Light Helps Sleep?" Michael Breus, Ph. D., psychologytoday.com, Sept. 10, 2013.

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Answer: D

Popular detox diets are neither a safe nor an effective way to cleanse your body and do not support a healthy lifestyle. Detox diets do not yield medically proven health benefits and, in some cases, can actually be risky to your health.

Detox or cleanse diets, like juice fasts or colon cleanses, purport the health benefits of removing toxins that build up in our bodies. However, when healthy, our bodies are experts at getting rid of toxins – despite what we eat. The main organ that works hard to detox our bodies each day is our livers. Our lives take any potentially harmful chemicals that come into our body via breathing, eating, drinking and even through our skin, and converts those chemicals into water-soluble chemicals that can be sweated or excreted from our bodies – cleansing us of these chemicals.

The best "diet" to support your body in its daily detox process is one focused on mainly whole foods, like fruits, vegetables, healthy fats and lean protein; and to reduce your intake of highly processed foods and sugary beverages.

"The Truth About Detox Diets," Kathleen Zelman, webmd.com, accessed on March 8, 2016.

"Detox Diets and Cleansing: Facts and Fallacies," Elizabeth Palermo, livescience.com, Feb. 9, 2015.