

eliminate the weight

▶ IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS, YOU

It's easy to lose sight of your daily nutrition – a few bites of your kid's lunch, a little too much dressing, a couple of work doughnuts. Before you know it, your physique progress has come to a halt.

This 10-Day Elimination Challenge shifts you away from winter comfort foods and slacking eating habits and reroutes you toward your get-lean goals. With just a few simple dietary changes, you could be summer-ready and full of energy in less than two weeks.

BY SHOSHANA PRITZKER, RD, CDN, CSSD, CISSN





COULD BE ON YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER SUMMER.

Take the challenge

This program challenges you to eliminate certain items from your diet for 10 days: sugar, artificial sweeteners, alcohol and processed grains. Eliminating these things will help break your bad habits, crush your cravings, reduce bloating, improve mood and increase energy. What's more, you may even lose a couple of pounds! By Day 11, you'll probably feel so good that you'll want to adopt this new style of eating for the long term.

That being said, continual and severe dietary restriction only leads to cravings, binges and an unhealthy relationship with food, so do this challenge for 10 days – no more. There is nothing wrong with having an occasional treat or a social cocktail with friends; it's when these things become habitual that you run into trouble. So after the 10 days is up, you can reintroduce these items into your diet now and then, just not on the reg.

Helpful Tips

- ▶ Before beginning, purge your pantry to thwart temptation. Toss out all processed foods and grains as well as foods with added sugar and artificial sweeteners.
- ▶ Read through the meal plan on Page 74 and create a grocery list based on those recipes. Prepare as many meals as you can ahead of time, and store leftovers for future lunches and dinners to save time and money.
- ▶ Carry meals and snacks with you to work and in the car to avoid cravings and set yourself up for success.



▶ **START TODAY**

Think you can swing it? Then get started today! You're only 10 days away from improved health, increased energy and a more positive outlook. You've got nothing to lose and everything to gain!

The No-So-Fab Four JUST WHAT IS IT ABOUT THESE FOUR

SUGAR

▶ According to a study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, sugar activates your opiate receptors and has the same effect on your brain and body as cocaine – and is equally as addictive. Excessive sugar consumption is linked to a myriad of health conditions, including obesity, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, inflammation and fatty liver disease.

The good news is that after only a few days without sugar, you'll be able to resist its lure. Your hormones will begin to regulate themselves, and your hunger signals will normalize. Unfortunately, cutting out sugar is not that simple, since it is added to many foods and drinks that are generally thought of as healthy such as yogurt, condiments and granola. More often than not, it hides behind an alias such as sucrose, dextrose, corn syrup or barley malt, making it harder to detect.

However, not all sugars are evil, and the sugar you're going to eliminate is "added sugar" – that which is not found naturally in a food source – such as table sugar (and its aliases), honey, agave and syrup. Naturally occurring sugars are found in plenty of healthy and nutritious foods such as fruit, dairy, carrots and even tomatoes. These foods are fair game during this challenge and beyond because they contain vitamins, minerals and lots of healthy fiber.

Cutting sugar might very well be the hardest part of this plan because of the sheer nature of its addictive qualities. But stick with it – read food labels carefully, and choose real fruit when you need a dose of the sweet stuff.

Most American adults ingest approximately 150 pounds of sugar a year.



FOODSTUFFS THAT MAKE THEM PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1? READ ON TO FIND OUT THE RESEARCH-BACKED REASONS WHY.

Artificial sweeteners can be found in things other than food, including toothpaste, cough syrup, chewable vitamins and gum.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

▶ While they sound enticing, “diet” foods and drinks made with artificial sweeteners may actually be worse for you than things made with real sugar. Since they are more potent than table sugar,

artificial sweeteners retrain your taste buds to crave sweeter and sweeter foods. And since they provide no nutritive value or sense of satisfaction, they can lead to overeating — causing weight gain, not weight loss. A study published in *Trends in Endocrinology & Metabolism* also found that consumption of foods with artificial sweeteners interfered with metabolic function, and more research links them to insulin resistance, increased body mass index and even Type 2 diabetes.

Even sugar alcohols such as xylitol, sorbitol and maltitol are nefarious, having the same kind of effect as artificial sweeteners, with the added ailments of possible bloating, gas, cramping and diarrhea.

PROCESSED GRAINS

▶ A processed or refined grain is one that has been stripped of its nutritive components such as fiber, vitamins and minerals, leaving behind a basic starch, which is then milled into flour. This flour acts like a simple sugar in your body: It is digested quickly, causing a spike in blood sugar and a rise in insulin, followed by a crash a couple of hours later. Consumption of refined grains has been linked to cravings, overeating, obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

Refined products such as bread, cereal, pasta and crackers should be avoided during this challenge. Replace them with complex carbohydrates that provide tons of energy and nutrients such as sweet potatoes, fruit, vegetables and beans. These kinds of carbs reduce cholesterol, improve insulin response, decrease body fat and ultimately reduce your risk of disease.

A study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology found a link between consumption of refined grains and the risk of coronary heart disease.

ALCOHOL

▶ Your body sees alcohol as a poison and literally stops all other metabolic processes in order to remediate and eliminate that alcohol — including fat metabolism, which is one of the liver’s primary functions. And because it is a depressant, once alcohol reaches your brain, all other bodily functions slow down, as well. Alcohol consumption has been linked to fatty liver disease, breast cancer, inflammation, high blood pressure, heart disease and depression, and since it contains a lot of empty calories — 7 calories per gram — regular intake can thwart your physique goals.

Eliminating alcohol can improve metabolism and liver function and reduce your risk of a host of chronic diseases and cancers. When dining out, try a mocktail or ask for a seltzer in a champagne glass to stay festive while being healthy.

Do the metabolic math: 2 glasses of wine (125 calories each) x 3 nights per week = 3,000 additional calories per month!

CAJUN SHRIMP BOIL FOIL PACKET DINNER

MAKES 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 20-30 uncooked shrimp, fresh or frozen, peeled
- 2 cups red or new potatoes, cleaned and quartered
- 4 fresh ears of corn, cut into thirds or quarters
- ½ cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 tsp Old Bay Seasoning

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven or grill to 400 F. Tear off 4 large pieces of aluminum foil and fold up edges to make a shallow box. Evenly distribute shrimp, potatoes, corn and broth between packets. Season each with ½ teaspoon Old Bay Seasoning. Seal packets by folding up the sides to cover contents, then tightly folding the ends over the seams. Grill or bake 30 to 40 minutes, or until potatoes are fork-tender, gently flipping packets halfway through. Be careful when opening because the steam is very hot!

Nutrition Facts (per serving):

calories 335, fat 4 g, protein 35 g, sodium 622 mg, carbs 44 g, fiber 5 g, sugar 5 g

Make this recipe your own by adding veggies you love, such as bell peppers, mushrooms and onions. Or kick up the protein per serving with some Andouille chicken or turkey sausage.

COCONUT MINT CUCUMBER SPRITZER

MAKES 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups unsweetened coconut water
- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 English cucumber, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fresh mint leaves, chopped
- 1 cup coconut seltzer water

DIRECTIONS

In a large pitcher, combine coconut water, lime juice, cucumber and mint leaves. Chill 1 to 2 hours. When ready to serve, divide evenly between 4 glasses and top each with ¼ cup seltzer.

Nutrition Facts (per serving):

calories 99, fat 1 g, protein 2 g, sodium 257 mg, carbs 20 g, fiber 3 g, sugar 16 g

SNACK PLATE

MAKES 1 Serving

INGREDIENTS

- 1 hard-boiled egg, halved
- 1 mozzarella cheese stick
- 4 slices turkey pepperoni
- ¼ cup berries of choice
- 1 oz cinnamon-roasted almonds (such as Blue Diamond)
- ½ cucumber, sliced

DIRECTIONS

Cut cheese stick in half. Wrap each half in 2 slices pepperoni. Lay all ingredients on a plate like a charcuterie platter.

Nutrition Facts: calories 366, fat 24 g, protein 21 g, sodium 482 mg, carbs 20 g, fiber 5 g, sugar 13 g

PROTEIN PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

MAKES 12 Cookies

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup coconut flour
- ½ cup vanilla protein powder
- 1 cup all-natural peanut butter
- 2 large eggs

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Using a spoon, combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Use a tablespoon to scoop batter and arrange on prepared sheet. Use a fork to flatten balls and make a crisscross pattern. Bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until edges are slightly browned. Allow to cool 10 minutes, then move to a wire rack to cool completely.

Nutrition Facts (per cookie):

calories 221, fat 13 g, protein 13 g, sodium 115 mg, carbs 11 g, fiber 4 g, sugar 1 g

Don't like eggs? Allergic to dairy? This snack plate is a suggestion. Design yours with clean, healthy foods that make you happy and are low in carbs and sugar!





One study published in the Nutrition Journal found that women were more prone to weight gain and increased waist circumference from excess alcohol consumption than men.

Here are some foods you should and should not eat during this 10-day challenge.

YEA

- ▶ **Vegetables**, including leafy greens, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers, bell peppers, zucchini, celery, spinach, carrots and root vegetables
- ▶ **Complex carbs** such as potatoes, beans, legumes, quinoa, freekeh, hummus and oatmeal
- ▶ **Fresh fruit** such as berries, apples, peaches, pears, grapes, plums, bananas and citrus
- ▶ **Nuts, seeds** and nut/seed butters
- ▶ **Lean meats** such as pork, beef and bison
- ▶ **Eggs and poultry** with the skin removed
- ▶ **Fish** such as tilapia, salmon, cod and tuna
- ▶ **Low-fat, low-sugar dairy and cheese**, such as Greek yogurt, cottage cheese and string cheese
- ▶ **Healthy fats** such as olive oil and avocados
- ▶ **No-calorie beverages** such as iced tea, coffee and seltzer

NAY

- ▶ **Processed/refined grain** products such as cereal, crackers, pasta, white rice and bread
- ▶ **Commercially baked goods** and sweets such as packaged cookies, cakes and candy
- ▶ **Fast food** such as fried chicken, french fries and frozen dinners
- ▶ **Natural sweeteners** such as table sugar, honey, agave and syrup added to any food or drink
- ▶ **Artificial sweeteners** added to any food or drink
- ▶ **Alcoholic beverages**, especially those high in sugar (sparkling wine) or mixed cocktails with juice or soda
- ▶ **Condiments**, salad dressings and sauces with added sugar and excessive sodium
- ▶ **High-fat foods** such as whole milk and ground beef
- ▶ **Both sugary and diet beverages** such as soda, juices and cocktail mixers
- ▶ **Canned fruit** in heavy syrup

DAY

1

Breakfast

2 scrambled eggs + ¼ sliced avocado + ¼ cup sliced fruit



Lunch

Large salad (veggies of choice) + 4 oz grilled chicken + ¼ cup chickpeas + 1 tbsp sunflower seeds + 1 tbsp pomegranate seeds (optional) + 1 tbsp olive oil + 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

Snack

2 tbsp nut butter + celery sticks

Dinner

Cajun Shrimp Boil Foil Packet Dinner* + Coconut Mint Cucumber Spritzer*

2

Breakfast

2 scrambled eggs + ¼ cup black beans + ¼ cup guacamole + ½ cup sauteed peppers and onions + 2 tbsp salsa + ¼ cup fresh fruit of choice

Lunch

Cajun Shrimp Boil Foil Packet Dinner*



Snack

Snack Plate*

Dinner

4 oz grilled chicken + 1 small baked sweet potato + 1-2 cups steamed vegetables of choice

3

Breakfast

1 (5 oz) container 2% plain Greek yogurt + ¼ cup chopped walnuts + 1 tbsp unsweetened shredded coconut + ¼ cup blueberries



Lunch

2 hard-boiled eggs (diced) mixed with 2 tbsp olive oil mayonnaise (dash salt, pepper and paprika) + ¼ cup hummus + ½ cucumber, sliced

Snack

Protein Peanut Butter Cookies*

Dinner

4 oz grilled chicken + ½ cup black beans + ¼ cup corn + 1 cup roasted vegetables

4

Breakfast

2 hard-boiled eggs + 2 slices bacon + 1 tomato, sliced

Lunch

4 slices baked sweet potato, each topped with 1 tbsp ricotta cheese + 1 tsp pomegranate seeds + 1 tbsp chopped walnuts + dash sea salt + dash cinnamon

Snack

Protein Peanut Butter Cookies*

Dinner

4 oz grilled salmon + 1 cup asparagus + 1 cup roasted potatoes



5

Breakfast

2 scrambled eggs + ¼ avocado, sliced + ¼ cup sliced fruit



Lunch

4 oz grilled salmon + 1 cup asparagus + ½ cup roasted potatoes

Snack

Snack Plate*

Dinner

3 turkey meatballs + 2 cups cooked spaghetti squash + ¼ cup tomato sauce + 1 tbsp Parmesan cheese + 1 cup steamed broccoli



NUTRITION FACTS

Calories
1,314
Fat
60 g
Protein
92 g
Sodium
1,389 mg
Carbs
103 g
Fiber
22 g
Sugar
38 g

Calories
1,290
Fat
50 g
Protein
107 g
Sodium
2,356 mg
Carbs
112 g
Fiber
23 g
Sugar
36 g

Calories
1,346
Fat
77 g
Protein
92 g
Sodium
1,400 mg
Carbs
74 g
Fiber
21 g
Sugar
20 g

Calories
1,362
Fat
69 g
Protein
85 g
Sodium
1,563 mg
Carbs
99 g
Fiber
17 g
Sugar
14 g

Calories
1,322
Fat
64 g
Protein
93 g
Sodium
2,222 mg
Carbs
99 g
Fiber
25 g
Sugar
36 g

6

Breakfast

Omelet: Cook together 2 large eggs + 3 egg whites + 1 cup chopped kale + ¼ cup diced onions + ¼ cup diced cooked sweet potatoes. Serve with ½ grapefruit.

Lunch

Large salad (veggies of choice) + 4 oz grilled chicken + ¼ cup chickpeas + 1 tbsp sunflower seeds + 1 tbsp pomegranate seeds (optional) + 1 tbsp olive oil + 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

Snack

Guacamole Deviled

Eggs: Cut 2 hard-boiled eggs in half and remove yolks. Fill centers with guacamole (¼ cup total). Serve with ¼ cup pistachios, shells on.

Dinner

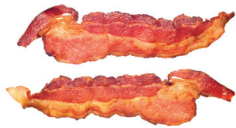
Cajun Shrimp Boil Foil Packet Dinner* steamed broccoli

Calories
1,351
Fat
60 g
Protein
109 g
Sodium
1,682 mg
Carbs
105 g
Fiber
17 g
Sugar
33 g

7

Breakfast

2 hard-boiled eggs + 2 slices bacon + 1 tomato, sliced



Lunch

4 rounds cooked sweet potato, each topped with 1 tbsp mashed avocado + 1 slice bacon, crumbled + sprinkle of Everything Bagel seasoning + 3 oz baked or grilled chicken on the side

Snack

Guacamole Deviled

Eggs: Cut 2 hard-boiled eggs in half and remove yolks. Fill centers with guacamole (¼ cup total). Serve with ¼ cup pistachios, shells on.

Dinner

Cajun Shrimp Boil Foil Packet Dinner* + Coconut Mint Cucumber Spritzer*

Calories
1,309
Fat
58 g
Protein
103 g
Sodium
2,218 mg
Carbs
100 g
Fiber
17 g
Sugar
34 g

8

Breakfast

1 (5 oz) container 2% plain Greek yogurt + ¼ cup chopped walnuts + 1 tbsp unsweetened shredded coconut + ¼ cup blueberries



Lunch

Mix 2 hard-boiled eggs (diced) + 2 tbsp olive oil mayonnaise (dash salt, pepper and paprika). Serve with ¼ cup hummus + ½ cucumber (sliced).

Snack

Protein Peanut Butter Cookies*

Dinner

4 oz grilled chicken + 1 small baked sweet potato + 1-2 cups steamed vegetables of choice

Calories
1,395
Fat
79 g
Protein
94 g
Sodium
1,151 mg
Carbs
79 g
Fiber
19 g
Sugar
25 g

9

Breakfast

2 scrambled eggs + ¼ cup black beans + ¼ cup guacamole + ½ cup sauteed peppers and onions + 2 tbsp salsa + ¼ cup fresh fruit of choice

Lunch

4 slices cooked sweet potato, each topped with 1 tbsp ricotta cheese + 1 tsp pomegranate seeds + 1 tbsp chopped walnuts + dash sea salt + dash cinnamon

Snack

Snack Plate*

Dinner

1 (90% lean) ground beef burger (4 oz) + 1 slice cheese of choice + ½ small baked sweet potato + 1-2 cups steamed vegetables of choice



Calories
1,408
Fat
86 g
Protein
93 g
Sodium
2,160 mg
Carbs
75 g
Fiber
18 g
Sugar
31 g

10

Breakfast

2 scrambled eggs + ¼ avocado, sliced + ¼ cup sliced fruit

Lunch

Large salad (veggies of choice) + 4 oz grilled chicken + ¼ cup chickpeas + 1 tbsp sunflower seeds + 1 tbsp pomegranate seeds (optional) + 1 tbsp olive oil + 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

Snack

2 pieces mozzarella string cheese + ¼ cup pistachios, shells on



Dinner

Cajun Shrimp Boil Foil Packet Dinner* + Coconut Mint Cucumber Spritzer*

Calories
1,398
Fat
70 g
Protein
102 g
Sodium
1,604 mg
Carbs
101 g
Fiber
20 g
Sugar
35 g