

IT'S DEFINITELY easier to stay in great shape if you've already been exercising regularly and eating fairly well, but it's also completely normal for even the most committed health-nut to slip up now and then. When I need to shape up, tighten up and lift up (my energy as well as my body!) as quick smart as possible, this is the format I follow; and it really works. But no half-hearted attempts – it is, after all, only a week.

STEP 1. **No alcohol.**

No exceptions.

STEP 2. **Start the day with a digestive kick-start.**

My days start with a high-grade magnesium supplement, chased by two glasses of tepid water. Those who find things particularly hard to move in the morning can add some lemon or fresh lime to the water, or some pink or grey sea salt. You can also try the following yoga pose to massage and relax your colon: lie flat on your back and pull one knee in toward your chest. Do this by grasping around the knee with both hands, fingers interlocked. It's best to pull the knee out to the side, and then in toward your armpit. This allows you to go deeper into the stretch. Keep your head flat and look down your body towards your knees. Start with one leg at a time, and then after doing each side (right first), pull in and hug both legs to you. Remember to breathe through the motion, in through the nose. Hold each part of this pose for at least 10 to 20 seconds.

STEP 3. **It sounds obvious but you have to GET MOVING!**

How often do you think 'Oh, I'd like to exercise more, but I'm just too busy', or 'I only have 20 minutes to spare so it's not worth it'? Guess what? Every minute really does count. If you're looking

to shape up quick-smart then you simply must do some exercise every day for this measly seven-day period. I'd suggest alternating the tough stuff (meaning weights, running, exercise that breaks muscle down) with some recovery. Yoga is one good example, but even a light walk is okay if you did a big sweat session the previous day. When I'm really keen to tighten up, I try to squeeze in two sweat sessions per day – even if it is only a quick circuit for 15 minutes. Just make sure it's a real workout; not a half-hearted effort.

STEP 4. **Quit eating so darn much!**

Again, a bit obvious, but if you cut back on your food intake then your body will tighten up. Of course, there is a bit more to it than just cutting back – I certainly don't advocate obsessive calorie counting or skipping meals, but I do encourage you to consider the size of your meals. The protein element should equate to about a palm size (for an 'average' 70kg adult). And that's your palm, not your local giant's palm!. Fill the rest of your plate with fresh vegetables and salads and a couple of teaspoons of good fat, such as coconut oil, organic ghee or butter, extra virgin olive oil or avocado – these are all great examples of foods that help burn fat and sustain energy.

STEP 5. **Get eight hours of rest a night.**

One of my favorite books is called *Lights Out: Sleep, Sugar and Survival* by TS Wiley, and it details vividly how a lack of sleep can cause you to hold onto fat stores regardless of exercise or nutrition. This is due to the imbalance caused to your hormonal system when you don't get enough shut-eye. Sufficient sleep will not only aid your physical and psychological repair, and relieve your body of nasty fat-storing stress hormones, it will also allow you to exercise more effectively throughout

the day, and feel mentally strong enough to resist temptation.

STEP 6. **Watch the sneaky fat makers.**

You may not realise how much that skinny latte, low-fat yoghurt, cup of tea with one sugar, etc is affecting your waistline. It's only a week, so be strict. That means no sugar-laden beverages. This includes sugar in tea/coffee, milky tea/coffee, fruit juices (even fresh), artificial sweeteners of any kind, including diet soft drink (studies have shown that these can trick your hormonal system and cause a fat storing reaction). You can also cut out the low-fat products (as they are generally laden with sugar, and even if they're not, they're still not as nutritious as fresh food). And say 'no' 100 per cent of the time to any kind of sneaky snack. That means not even one jelly baby! It really does all add up. And... it's only one week!

STEP 7. **Be careful with caffeine.**

Personally, I love my coffee, and enjoy at least one organic long macchiato each day. But, too much caffeine can have a very undesirable effect – it can cause a stress hormone reaction that puts you into fat-storing mode. So, limit yourself to one cup in the morning, and stay off any other kind of caffeinated stimulant.

And hey, even if you don't have an urgent reason to want to shape up fast, why not follow this program for just one week and see what you can achieve? Who knows – it may inspire you to live every day with greater health and energy!

Oh – and if you don't have your own reason, use mine: being unhealthy sucks. And it makes you unhappy. You know it, and I know it.

And guess what? Now, today, yes this very minute, really is the best time to start transforming your body.

Good luck!