

# WHY DETOXIFY

energy infusion \* enhanced mood \* improved circulation \* purification  
immune system improvement \* a return to natural dietary order  
counteract decreasing food quality \* offset stress effects \* cleanse skin

## Process boasts bundle of benefits

By **Stephanie Fagnani**  
For Living & Being

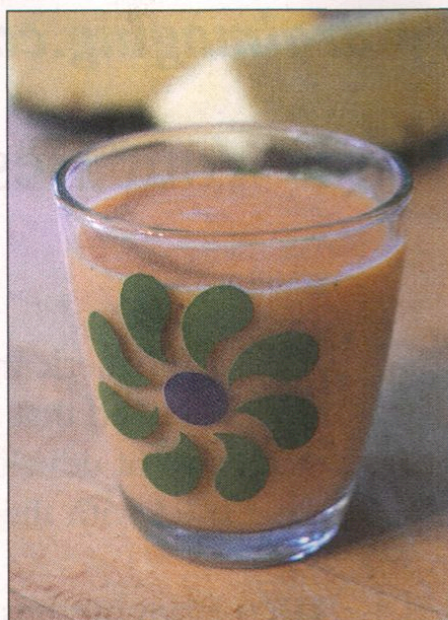
The annual ritual of spring cleaning involves activities like washing all the windows in our homes. In summer, we grab a hose and soap up our cars. We welcome fall armed with a rake to tidy up our yards.

But when it comes to cleaning out our own bodies, we rarely give it a second thought.

Detoxifying — or cleaning out — our internal system through diet or fasting, massage, meditation or herbal supplements can give our bodies a boost of energy, increase blood flow and aid in the elimination of our body's waste.

In terms of the foods we eat, internal cleansing can also be applied to a seasonal schedule, said Andrea Ramirez, a holistic health counselor at Beacon Healing Collective in Beacon.

"When people are in contact with the food that nature offers, cleansing happens in a natural way," Ramirez said. "In the spring, there is an abundance of vegetables, herbs and bitter greens and those help clean and detox. From spring to summer, watermelon is very cleansing and keeps the body cool. The foods are more robust [in the fall] and there are



Darryl Bautista/Living & Being

A smoothie made by health counselor Andrea Ramirez at the Beacon Healing Collective in Beacon.

more root and sweet vegetables. In the winter, normally the diet would have more protein and fat."

However, the modern conveniences of air conditioning and electric heat, coupled with the often unwavering eating habits we engage in year-round, allow us to fool our bodies and leads to a general disconnect with nature, Ramirez said.

"The closer that you are to a natural

diet, the better because the body has systems of detoxifying in place," she said. "But the quality of our food has gotten impoverished much faster than we genetically are to adapt to (therefore) the more important it is to detoxify."

A juice fast, which Ramirez organizes regularly at the collective, can help give the digestive system a rest and flush toxins from the body. She makes all the juices for the fast.

The one Ramirez offers, she explained by e-mail, is a liquid cleanse — it allows vegetable broth, herbal teas and as much pure water as you can drink. The body then has a chance to take a break from digesting food.

### Consider a massage

Stress can also cause a buildup of toxins in the body. Christine Seymour, a massage therapist who works for both the Beacon Healing Collective and the Irvington-based River Spa in Westchester County, finds her clients respond well to a dry brush massage, which is conducted with a soft brush on a dry body using small strokes starting at the feet and moving up toward the heart.

"What massage does is it moves and increases blood circulation, which increases the oxygen in our bodies. The more oxygen we have in our blood, the better it's able to remove all the toxins through our lymph system," Seymour said. "There are cultures that [engage in

## Halloween 3-day juice cleanse

Oct. 27-Oct. 29 at Beacon Healing Collective, 107 Teller Ave., Beacon. Group counseling sessions held daily, 7-8 p.m. beginning Oct. 26. \$175 fee includes juices and broths, counseling, natural bristle body brush and e-mail support. Information: E-mail [andrea@soulterraholic.com](mailto:andrea@soulterraholic.com) or call 845-231-2470.

## Tai chi/qi gong classes

Cassia Berman conducts public tai chi and qi gong sessions at Woodstock Town Hall, and private healing or instructional sessions at her residence by appointment. Information: 845-679-9457.

massage] every day and then take a bath because exfoliating dead skin cells will also increase oxygen intake. Our skin is our largest organ and if it's clogged it doesn't breathe well," she said.

Seymour said essential oils can also be used to aid with detoxification, but only therapeutic grade oils that can be ingested are safe. Juniper, for example, helps open up pores, and rosemary can act as a natural diuretic, she said.

Roberto Valoy, a sales representative at House of Herbs Herbal Health Consultants in Millbrook, said certain herbal supplements can help cleanse the intestines, stomach and colonic area.

### More benefits; fewer side-effects

"That means you're going to have better health as far as energy, better looking skin and better reproductive functions because everything works better," Valoy said. "A lot of people are surprised to find that when they use a lot of the natural products they find better relief (than when they use medications) and no side effects, or the side effect is usually another benefit."

The benefits of detoxifying through a martial arts program often extend beyond the physical and end up greatly enhancing one's mental, emotional and sometimes even spiritual state.

Woodstock resident Cassia Berman had a life-changing experience some 30 years ago after learning how to align her body properly through tai chi, a traditional Chinese mind-body relaxation exercise consisting of intricate exercise sequences performed in a slow, relaxed manner.

"It was a mysterious process to me, but when I started studying the basics of Chinese medicine I started understanding that when the body opens and relaxes, the natural life healing energy starts flowing properly," Berman said.

Now a teacher of tai chi and qi gong — a component of traditional Chinese medicine that combines movement, meditation and regulation of breathing to enhance the flow of vital energy in the body to improve blood circulation and



Health counselor Andrea Ramirez makes a smoothie for the purpose of detoxification of the body. The smoothie is part of a 3-day fast to detoxify the body.

enhance immune function — as well as being certified as a qi healer and qi gong therapist by the Chinese Healing Arts Center (a group of centers that offer complete clinical care in Chinese medicine), she believes more than ever in the mind/body/spirit connection.

"Primarily, you need to have a positive mind and good information, not only about the processes of detoxification but

about learning how to calm the mind," Berman said. "If you learn how to let go and breathe properly and follow the alignment that both tai chi and qi gong teach, chronic problems have a way of healing by themselves." ♦

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