

ask the experts

ADVICE TIPS FROM OUR EXPERT PANEL



Q. I've heard about beauty products containing toxic ingredients, so how do I detox my skin?

A. Dr Mariano Spiezia explains: The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health reports that 884 of the ingredients used in cosmetics are toxic and some of them, like phthalates or parabens, act as endocrine disruptors or oestrogen imposters, interfering with the human oestrogenic activity. Petroleum- or silicon-based cosmetics also clog the pores, blocking the skin's natural ability to breathe and release internal toxins and waste. What can you do? Here is a two-week skin detox programme. In the first week, bathe three times, adding twice to the water a handful of sea salt or Himalayan pink salt, and three tablespoons of bentonite clay. After 20 minutes of soaking, massage your body firmly but gently with a natural fibre glove to stimulate the peripheral blood circulation. In the second week bathe only twice, alternating the sea salt and the bentonite clay. During these two weeks increase intake of fresh organic fruit and veg, especially carrot and celery. Take burdock (capsule or tincture) twice daily with a glass of fresh pure water and an antioxidant such as proanthocyanadins. In the long term, use organic and preferably oil-based skin care, to help your skin detox and cleanse and nourish it with the correct and vital nutrients. Your body and your skin will be much healthier and happier. Your spirit too!

Q. What can I do to get a better night's sleep?

A. Brian Morris recommends: First off, it's not just about getting a better night's sleep, it's also about waking up and feeling fresh and ready to face the day. Let's get the commonsense things out of the way. Don't eat heavy meals or have stimulating drinks before turning in and try and relax for an hour or so before bed so you are ready. Alcohol may put you to sleep but you may regret it the next morning, and take regular exercise. Poor sleeping patterns tend to mean you're out of balance. To restore balance, eat a good diet with plenty of green vegetables, cut out or down on the heavy carbohydrates such as bread, potatoes and pasta, and take a superfood supplement during the day, for example spirulina or wheatgrass juice (for the latter, fresh or freeze-dried is best). These wholefoods have good levels of calcium and magnesium that do aid sleep, plus you should feel energised anyway. Before bed, try good quality valerian root – tincture is best – as this herb is well documented for its calming and sleep-inducing qualities. A caveat though is that for a minority of people, valerian can have an energising effect. If this happens, take it during the day instead. But for sleeplessness caused by high stress or trauma, go to your GP.



Q. I'm looking for ideas for caffeine-free teas. Can you give me any suggestions?

A. Paranthaman Retnasabapathy suggests: Java tea has a delicate fragrance and mellow taste and has been drunk in South East Asia for centuries. Unlike some other herbal and green teas, java tea has no bitter after-taste. Java tea comes from the leaves of the plant known as *Orthosiphon Stamenius* and is affectionately called 'Mesai Kuching', which translates as cat's whiskers, by those in South East Asia as the flower of the plant has stamens that look like cat's whiskers. Because java tea comes from a different plant to black tea there is no caffeine in java tea, unlike black, green and white tea. In addition to tasting great, java tea has been shown to have an antioxidant effect, a diuretic effect which works by flushing excess uric acid from the body, useful in preventing kidney stone formation, an anti-allergy effect and is anti-inflammatory – one study suggests that the active ingredients in java tea reduces temperature if you are suffering from a fever – and a blood pressure and blood sugar-lowering effect.



THE PANEL



Brian Morris is a professional writer who has spent the last 10 years closely involved with natural health as a director of Xynergy Health Products. He has had the privilege of working with some of the world's true natural health pioneers including Leslie Kenton and Mitchell May.



Dr Mariano Spiezia is a medical doctor, herbalist and homeopath, who co-founded and formulated Inlight organic skin care.



Paranthaman Retnasabapathy is a farmer of java tea in rural Malaysia, and works alongside the Kuching tea brand.