

Juicing For Weight Loss

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Table of Contents

Health Benefits of Juicing	3
How Can Juicing Help Achieve Weight Loss?	4
Juice Fasting and Detoxification	5
Combining Juicing With A Raw Food Diet	8
Juicing For Weight Maintenance	9
Vegetable Juicing vs. Fruit Juicing	9
Juicing Guidelines	11
Choosing a Juicer	15
Juice Recipes for Weight Loss	16
Does Juicing Really Work?	20

Health Benefits of Juicing

Eating more vegetables and fruits has always been a maxim for healthy eating. Various health studies have consistently correlated vegetables and fruits with lower blood pressure, lower risks of heart disease, stroke and cancer, as well as reduced risks for eye and digestive problems.

The USDA recommends from 5 to 13 servings of vegetables and fruits daily in people's diets. For a person who needs 2,000 calories a day, this would translate to around 4 ½ cups of vegetables and fruits daily, that is, 2 cups of fruits and 2 ½ cups of vegetables, not including potatoes as they are classified under starchy foods. Unfortunately, most Americans consume only around 1 ½ to 3 cups of vegetables and fruits daily.

For health-conscious people who seriously want to meet the ideal amount of vegetables and fruits in their diet, the increasingly popular way to achieve this is through juicing. Juicing is the process of squeezing out the juice from vegetables and fruits, separating the juice from the fibrous pulp.

It is much easier to drink a glass or two of vegetable and fruit juices rather than to eat two or more pounds of produce each day. Aside from meeting the recommended daily dietary quota, juicing of raw vegetables and fruits

preserves their vitamin and mineral content, a lot of which are destroyed during the cooking process.

In addition, drinking of freshly squeezed juices also provides the body with a rich, natural source of anti-oxidants and enzymes not found in their pasteurized grocery counterparts.

Proponents of juicing also tout the fact that juices are easily assimilated by the body, providing a quick boost to a person's energy and stamina. While it usually takes hours for solid food to be digested, juices are assimilated within 15 minutes of consumption with little assistance from the digestive system.

Aside from that, the digestive enzymes that come with the raw produce are preserved during juicing. The body is able to use the enzymes in the fresh juice in the digestive process, instead of using up and relying solely on the body's own enzyme reserves.

How Can Juicing Help Achieve Weight Loss?

For all the health benefits that can be derived from juicing, one favorable effect that advocates have discovered from juicing is that it can actually lead to weight loss. This effect is more readily noticeable in vegetable juicing. Some juicers have reported to have lost up to 18 pounds in three weeks when they went on a juice fast.

There are actually three levels of juicing to achieve weight loss. The first level pertains to juice fasting, a type of diet that mainly consists of freshly juiced vegetables and vegetable broths. The second level treats juicing as an essential part of a raw food diet. The third level uses juicing for weight maintenance.

Juice Fasting and Detoxification

Juice fasting is a healthier alternative to water detoxification diets. Detoxification is necessary in any weight loss diet. This fact is not very well known among people suffering from obesity and those who fail to lose weight despite dieting and exercise.

We are constantly exposed to toxic chemicals from our environment and even from the foods that we eat. For instance, a study conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency revealed that 83% of the population tested positive for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB). A Michigan study, on the other hand, found DDT in 70% of four-year-olds.

The chemical toxins in the body are either water-soluble or fat-soluble. Water-soluble toxins are eliminated through perspiration and urine. On the other hand, fat-soluble toxins, also called lipophilic toxins, dissolve and recombine with fat. This is true for both animals and humans. So, not

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only do we store toxins in our body fat, we also ingest toxins when we eat animal fat.

If there are toxins in our body, how come we are not getting poisoned? It turns out that our body fat actually protects us from these toxins. The fat acts as a protective buffer for the toxins. As a defensive mechanism, the fat cells resist being used as fuel for the body when you are undergoing weight loss diets and activities so as not to release the toxins into the bloodstream.

Juice fasting is the ideal way to detoxify the body as it provides essential nutrients and enhances the body's immune system while the body works on eliminating toxins through the various elimination channels of the body. This includes the blood, liver, kidneys, skin and lungs. Unlike water detoxification regimens, controlled juice fasting does not cause a healing crisis.

Healing crisis is commonly experienced during water detoxification because the toxins in the body are suddenly dumped into the bloodstream and overwhelms the primary organs of elimination. The person feels all sorts of aches and pains, including flu-like symptoms and back pain around the kidneys. With juice fasting, the toxins are released more slowly into the bloodstream at a rate that the body can manage. Though the person

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might still experience strong cravings, they are at a reasonably controllable intensity.

If you have never tried juice fasting before, you can start out with a 5-day program. On the first day, eat only raw fruits and vegetables. From the second to the fourth day, drink juices only as a replacement for all of your meals.

It is preferable to consume only vegetable juices, especially if you have diabetes or are predisposed to high blood sugar levels. On the last day, eat raw fruits and vegetables again just like in the first day. The raw fruit and vegetable diet for the first and last days allows your body to transition gradually into and out of your juice fasting.

The five-day program can be done periodically. It is ideal, however, to juice fast at least once a week so as to keep the body free of toxins. If you are worried about having hunger pangs, you would realize that once you get used to juice fasting, you won't even feel hungry anymore. Your body learns that it is getting the essential nutrients it needs. The hunger pangs you experienced in the past are more a product of habit, rather than an expression of a real need for sustenance.

Remember to drink plenty of water whenever you are fasting. You might even dilute your juices with water. This makes the juice easier on the system, especially if you are fasting for longer than three days.

Combining Juicing With A Raw Food Diet

To optimize weight loss, it is best to combine juicing with a [raw food diet](#). This is due to the effect of dieting on our metabolism. While you may experience rapid weight reduction during the early part of your juice fasting, as time goes by the thyroid gland adjusts the metabolism rate to the low volume of solid food being ingested.

This results in minimal weight loss. Eating more raw solid foods would signal to the thyroid gland that it needs to keep up the metabolism rate.

Juicing combined with a raw food diet has another effect on our metabolism. For people who have been overweight for a long time, the usual energy source is sugar in the body. Through juice fasting and raw food diet, you can train your body to use body fat instead of blood sugar as a source of energy. This will allow you to evade getting on a weight-loss plateau and continue losing pounds until you hit your ideal weight.

Juicing For Weight Maintenance

Once you've attained your ideal weight, juicing also makes it easier for you to maintain this ideal weight. When going through a juicing-based weight loss program, you gain the habit of drinking a glass of fresh juice before a meal. This effectively and naturally suppresses your appetite and does not leave you any harmful side-effects.

Vegetable Juicing vs. Fruit Juicing

If losing weight is your primary reason for juicing, you should be aware that very sweet fruits and vegetables are not the ideal produce to use. Sweet fruits and vegetables are high in sugars such as fructose, and when you juice them, you actually get high concentrations of sugar and calories in your drink.

Furthermore, fructose is a form of sugar that ferments and turns into alcohol, just like wine. Fructose ferments rapidly in the body especially in the presence of other foods like vegetables, proteins, and starches. Fermented fructose gets digested in the liver. So instead of the blood delivering the fructose as a source of energy to the muscles, it goes to the liver instead to be metabolized.

The liver, which is the organ that metabolizes both alcohol and fats, will resort to storing fat, if it has to spend too much time digesting fructose. If

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you juice a lot of sweet fruits and vegetables, chances are you will gain more pounds instead of losing weight.

Aside from the high fructose content in sweet fruits, vegetable juicing has another advantage over fruit juicing. Vegetables contain chlorophyll, the green photosynthetic pigment in plant leaves that absorbs energy from sunlight and changes it to chemical energy for the plant.

Studies even from way back in the 1920s and 1930s have revealed that chlorophyll, which is structurally very similar to heme in red blood cells, stimulates red blood cell production in the bone marrow. The chlorophyll molecular structure gets destroyed during cooking, so the ideal way to consume vegetables with their chlorophyll intact is by eating them raw or through juicing.

You also have to understand that the alkalinity of foods, including vegetables and fruits, have a significant effect on your weight-loss efforts. Excess acids stimulate the formation of fat cells to protect vital organs of the body. A lot of fruits are acidic or mildly acidic, and should just be eaten sparingly. Most vegetables are alkaline, which make them very suitable for weight-loss diets.

Juicing Guidelines

In order to get the most benefits from juicing, here are some guidelines to follow:

1. Choose organically grown vegetables as much as possible. Your juice will not only have a concentrated content of vitamins, minerals, and enzymes, it might also have a high concentration of pesticides if you use non-organic produce. According to data compiled by the Environmental Working Group from the USDA, the 12 non-organically grown vegetables and fruits that tested the highest in terms of pesticide residue are the following:
 - a. Peaches
 - b. Strawberries
 - c. Apples
 - d. Domestic blueberries
 - e. Nectarines
 - f. Cherries
 - g. Imported grapes
 - h. Celery
 - i. Sweet bell peppers
 - j. Spinach
 - k. Kale
 - l. Collard greens
 - m. Potatoes (nutritionally classified under starchy foods)

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The 15 vegetables and fruits least likely to be contaminated by pesticides are the following:

- a. Onions
- b. Sweet corns
- c. Sweet peas
- d. Asparagus
- e. Cabbage
- f. Eggplant
- g. Sweet potatoes
- h. Avocados
- i. Pineapples
- j. Mangoes
- k. Kiwi
- l. Domestic cantaloupe
- m. Watermelon
- n. Grapefruit
- o. Honeydew

Using these information, it would be best to buy organically for produce with the highest pesticide exposure. At the same time, it would be all right to buy non-organically grown produce from the ones classified as least likely to be contaminated.

Although there is no clear evidence to support claims that organically grown vegetables and fruits are nutritionally superior to conventionally grown produce, you are definitely safer from pesticides and food additives with USDA-certified organic foods. You must, however, wash organically grown vegetables thoroughly with running water to reduce dirt and bacteria.

You may also consume the pulp of organically grown produce used in juicing. One big concern with juicing is that you miss out on the health benefits derived from fiber. The pulp may be added to some pastry recipes.

2. If you're new to juicing, it would be best to start off with easily digestible (organic) vegetables, such as celery, fennel, and cucumber. Once you get used to these three, you can add the more nutritionally dense vegetables such as red leaf lettuce, green leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, endive, escarole, and spinach. Afterwards, you can go a step further by including cabbage, Chinese cabbage and Bok Choy to your vegetable choices. Cabbage, by the way, has been positively associated with healing ulcer, primarily due to its high S-methylmethionine content. At this point, you may experiment on including herbs to your juicing, such as parsley and cilantro. You have to be careful with cilantro as many people cannot tolerate it even though they are very nutritious. The last group of vegetables

you may consider adding to your juicing list are the bitter-tasting greens. Just use one or two leaves of these vegetables so they do not overpower the taste of your juice. These vegetables are kale, collard greens, dandelion greens, and mustard greens. For collard greens, buy those that are still attached to the main stalk as these vegetables quickly lose their nutrients once they are cut off.

3. To make your juice more palatable, try adding lemons, limes, cranberry or ginger. It is important to make your juice taste good so you do not get discouraged from continuing your juicing program.
4. It is advisable to drink your freshly squeezed juice immediately. The highly reactive enzymes in your juice oxidize quickly in the presence of oxygen. You might opt to mix in some lemon or lime juice as these juices can slow down the oxidation process. If you really need to store the juice, you may use an air-tight glass jar. Fill-up the jar to the brim so there's no extra space for air. You can also use a food vacuum pump to suck out the air from the jar.
5. Clean your juicer immediately after each use to prevent the growth of bacteria and mold. In this regard, it is important to choose a juicer that is easy to clean. If you find it too tedious to clean your juicer, you might lose your motivation to continue juicing.

Choosing a Juicer

There are different kinds of juicers. All of them have their advantages and disadvantages depending on your primary motivation for juicing. If you are juicing for weight-loss, then most of the produce you will be juicing will be vegetables.

[Check out and compare these Juicers](#)

Centrifugal juicers, such as the ones commonly advertised on television, do not work well with leafy vegetables. Although these juicers are fast, they lose a lot of the nutrients from the produce. You will notice that the pulp left over from these juicers is still wet and fluffy compared to the pulp coming out of other types of juicers. The juices extracted are also much lighter in color and less dense. Furthermore, the heat generated by these equipment can destroy some of the nutrients in the vegetables and fruits.

The preferred type of juicer for those intent on losing weight is either a press-type juicer or a masticating juicer. The press-type juicer, as the name implies, presses the food and squeezes the juice out of the food. The masticating juicer, on the other hand, grinds and crushes the food. These types of juicers yield the most juice with higher nutrient content.

As was mentioned earlier, another important consideration which you can't afford to neglect, is the ease of cleaning the equipment. Do not rely on advertising claims regarding this matter. Look for unbiased product reviews and listen to what other consumers are saying. Some people forego drinking their one glass of juice everyday simply because cleaning up the equipment is too much hassle.

Juice Recipes for Weight Loss

The Internet abounds in juice recipes for weight loss. Here are some highly recommended recipes:

1. Potassium Power House:

Combine cucumber, lettuce, celery, kale, and tomato.

For taste, add ½ carrot and 1 green apple, or ¼ lemon

2. Take advantage of the metabolism-stimulating effect of grapes and the fat-fighting properties of lemon with this recipe:

Juice a handful of grapes, 1 apple, ½ lemon or 1 lime. To spice up the taste, add ¼ or ½ inch ginger. Add cold drinking water to taste.

3. V8-Like Vegetable Juicing Recipe:

2 organic carrots

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2 organic Roma tomatoes,

½ cup spinach

1 or 2 celery stalks

To taste:

a handful of parsley bunch or cilantro

Optional:

add 1/10 cayenne (red) pepper after juice is done
to your glass and stir with a spoon.

4. SuperCleanser Juicing Recipe:

4 celery stalks

½ small beet

1 cilantro bunch

a handful of spinach

5. Breakfast Juice Fast Recipe:

¼ head of cabbage

3 stalks of carrots

1 apple with skin

Lunch Juice Fast Recipe: Combine the same ingredients above.

Add asparagus.

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6. Morning Detoxification and Weight-Loss Recipe:

½ apple

½ pear

3 stalks of carrots

ginger

For lunch:

Brussel sprouts

Cauliflower

3 stalks of carrots

For dinner:

Cabbage

Carrots

Any fruit

7. Simply Green Juice:

1 cup of spinach

2 cups of kale

2 cups of parsley

1 cucumber

3 celery stalks

Optional: a little garlic or ginger

8. Apple and Cucumber:

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2 ½ apples, with stems removed

½ cucumber

1 inch ginger

9. Alkaline Juicer Recipes:

1 cup of spinach

½ cucumber

2 stalks of celery, including leaves

3 carrots

½ apple

10. Green Heaven Detox Juice Recipe:

3 stalks of celery

4 large spinach leaves

1 handful of parsley

½ cucumber

1 shot of wheatgrass

Note: This is a strong green juice, so start small to minimize detoxification reactions.

Does Juicing Really Work?

Juicing is viewed differently by practitioners of conventional Western medicine and supporters of alternative medicine. Although both sides agree that juicing does help people to meet their daily recommended quota of servings for vegetables and fruits, conventional health professionals caution people from following a diet that is purely based on juice.

One disadvantage of juicing for weight loss is the low protein content of juices. Protein is important for building up the body's tissues. Some studies point out that a high-protein diet is more effective for weight loss than lower-protein diets.

Another disadvantage of juicing is that it sacrifices its fiber content in order to squeeze out an optimum amount of anti-oxidants from the produce. Certainly, anti-oxidants are extremely beneficial in keeping the heart healthy, but fiber is also essential for preventing constipation, as well as lowering cholesterol and preventing heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

There are also studies that show that fiber is necessary for weight loss. It is the fiber that traps the bile acids as they enter the digestive tract. The bile acids transport the fat-soluble toxins which are excreted by the liver. Deficiency in fiber, together with constipation, will cause the body to

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become too toxic and will eventually stall any weight loss efforts.

Paradoxically, detoxification is one of the primary benefits of juicing cited by juicing proponents.

Some researchers adamantly oppose juicing and urge people to eat whole fruits instead. According to their study, aside from providing fiber, eating whole fruits lead to more adequate satiety levels. This cited study, however, was not conducted on vegetable juicing which is the recommended type of juicing for weight loss.

The question on whether or not juicing actually works for weight loss falls under the many debatable questions between conventional medicine and alternative medicine. Western thought strictly demands scientific evidence from studies and experiments that rule out extraneous factors and have results that can be reproduced by anyone conducting the same study.

Alternative medicine, on the other hand, put a high value on testimonials and the wisdom of ancient civilizations. Fasting, for instance, has been practiced for ages by believers of different faiths such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and even Christianity.

There is no conclusive scientific evidence supporting the effectiveness of juicing in resetting a person's metabolism. Neither conventional medicine nor alternative medicines have all the answers to people's health concerns.

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The decision to try out juicing for weight loss is a personal decision. It would be prudent, though, to keep in mind criticisms on potential nutrient deficiencies that could arise from juicing, and to take sensible steps to prevent such problems from arising.