

Healing

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Featuring: Yoga Flow

Cleansing for Mind/Body Balance

By Kyle Roderick



For millennia, indigenous peoples and practitioners of organized religion have fasted to bring themselves closer to the universal life force, their respective deities, and their true selves. You too can practice a 21st century form of fasting, known as cleansing, whenever you want to give your body a rest or clear your consciousness.

To clarify, a cleansing fast lasts one to three days, during which you never skip meals, says Jennifer Workman, M.S., R.D. (www.thebalancedapproach.com), a Boulder-based complementary medicine nutritionist and Ayurveda instructor. As Workman explains, "When you cleanse, it's best to eat simple, light, nutritious, and tasty foods such as kichadi, which is mung bean dal served over basmati rice." (A recipe for kichadi can be found at Workman's website: www.thebalancedapproach.com/newsletter.html#recipe).

Cleansing is in and fasting is out because water or juice fasting (or even skipping meals) can trigger low blood sugar, dizziness, headaches, and fainting, Workman says. "I never recommend fasting as research has proven that the liver needs a certain amount of protein each day to perform its vital functions in the body. When the body goes without food for long periods," Workman continues, "liver health is compromised and your whole body is otherwise endangered."

While you can cleanse any time of year, "Your body and mind can greatly benefit from seasonal cleansing," says cer-

tified Ayurvedic practitioner Lisa Schrempp. "Seasonal cleansing gives you a chance to help clear out any congestion, dampness, or heat that may have developed during the preceding months."

But there's more to cleansing than just eating light and right. Registered nurse Jackie Sherman, Ph.D., advises, "During purification, when your body needs peace to cleanse and recharge, go to sleep early and avoid napping during the day." Sherman, who is also the owner of **Yoga Flow** yoga studio in Tucson, Arizona, also recommends doing gentle exercise, such as restorative yoga. Finally, because stress leads to dysfunctional digestion, and meditation is medically proven to lower stress levels, "Meditate every day to free your mind and body of stress," Sherman says. "Then you will really feel cleansed."

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