

elemental *cleanse*

Breathe. Nourish. Balance.

Caffeine

Eliminate Slowly to Avoid Withdrawal

Ahhhhh, the delicious smell of coffee in the morning. Believe me, I know. Each day I make French Press coffee. It's a ritual. I confess that I don't even make the best cup of coffee, but I love the process of boiling the water, stirring the grounds and smelling that oh-so-delicious smell. I even love the sound the coffee makes when it splashes into my cup. On a normal day (by that I mean that I am not Cleansing) I have a cup of coffee. It's easy for me to not drink more because (1) I make bad coffee, and (2) I'm a Windy mind and usually forget where I've set my cup down after I've poured.

Most people don't really know how much coffee they are drinking. The normal cup of 20 years ago equals two of our normal cups now. Not to mention the "pick me ups" at the local coffee house which seem like special treats, but turn into daily doses. And then there is the soda pop. On an average day, you could have two to four caffeinated beverages and not even realize it. Caffeine is highly addictive and really does sneak up on you.

Why We Eliminate Caffeine

Disease stems from poor digestion. Caffeine slows digestion. It puts out the fire or Agni we are working so hard to build. Caffeine dehydrates you. Drinking caffeine stresses the physical, mental and emotional bodies. It increases the levels of glucocorticoids, such as cortisol, which actually make you hold onto fat. These are stress hormones.

Caffeine has a negative effect on the immune system making it harder to fight viral and bacterial infections. Caffeine causes your body to take oxygen from your brain to your extremities causing memory loss. If you are drinking unfiltered coffee, you are increasing your LDL.

Caffeine and your body

Did you know that caffeine has a half life of six hours in your body? That means that if you drink a coffee at 3:00 p.m., your body will have processed only half of it by 9 pm. This is disruptive to your sleep.

Caffeine is addictive. When you stop using caffeine, you may experience symptoms of withdrawal in as little as 12 hours. Symptoms of withdrawal include:

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Headaches

Flu-like symptoms

Irritability and restlessness

Difficulty concentrating

Muscle stiffness

Chills

Hot flashes

Jitters

Insomnia

Anxiety

Nausea

Irregular heartbeat

Flushed face

The good news is that caffeine is an addiction that is easy to break and it doesn't have to be painful. To eliminate caffeine from your diet, do the following:

Week 1: Go about your daily routine. When you get up in the morning and want your cup of coffee (you can think soda or tea here as well), go ahead and make it just like you always do. Go to the sink and pour 1/3 off. Drink your coffee and enjoy. If you make a pot in the morning, go ahead and make the pot. Go to the sink and pour 1/3 off. Drink as usual. The same is true for sodas. Get your soda, pour 1/3 off, drink and enjoy.

Week 2: The same as above, but now you are pouring two-thirds of the cup away. This is the week when you may consider adding a decaf hot tea to your routine on top of the 1/3-cup of coffee

Week 3: No more caffeine. Substitute teas and hot waters instead.

During this process, if you suffer from any of the previously mentioned withdrawal symptoms, have a very small serving of caffeine to ease your suffering. A quarter cup of coffee will do the trick. *Most people are surprised that they are completely off caffeine by Week 2!*

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Try This:

If you simply can't stand to hold a ½ empty mug, substitute the coffee elimination with warm soymilk. You will find the milk to be very filling.

Regular vs. Decaf

Many Cleansers request that they switch from regular coffee to decaf coffee during their Cleanse. The answer to the request is always no. While decaf coffee does contain trace amounts of caffeine, it is only around 1 – 5 mg. That's not a lot so you might think, "Why not?" The reason I don't want you to make that switch is that we are learning new behaviors. To learn to drink teas infused with healing herbs or heated non-dairy milks that are full of nutrition is a powerful lifestyle change that will benefit you long-term.

"Caffeine can't provide energy, only chemical stimulation and induced emergency state that can lead to irritability, mood swings, and panic attacks. Caffeine's ultimate mood effect can be letdown, which can lead to depression and chronic fatigue. Caffeine gives the illusion of heightened alertness by dilating pupils, quickening heart rate, and raising blood pressure. In fact, caffeine does not increase overall mental activity." ~ Stephen Cherniske, "Caffeine Blues"



The following table lists the caffeine content in some popular beverages. There is no recommended daily allowance for caffeine.

Recommended Daily Allowance	0 mg of caffeine
Brewed Coffee at home (8 oz)	100 mg
Starbucks (12oz)	260 mg
Caribou Coffee (12 oz)	230 mg

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Dunkin Donuts (10 oz)	165
Instant Coffee (8 oz)	70 mg
Double espresso (2oz)	45 – 100 mg
Soda	45 – 60 mg
Tea	35 – 70 mg
Dark Chocolate	25 mg
Red Bull	80 mg
Bottled Yerba Matte Beverage (16 oz)	140 mg
Diet Coke	47 mg
Mountain Dew	54 mg
Rockstar	80 mg