

Changing our eating habits towards a macrobiotic diet Eight week programme for healing the body

Nature is perfect and never makes big jumps, but changes very gradually. As a human being we cannot do better than nature is teaching us. Unless you are diagnosed with a life-threatening disease, don't jump from one eating pattern towards another. It is a process of months or years for the body to adapt to a completely different eating and lifestyle. Often by eating a macrobiotic diet, the body undergoes a yang energising effect. This is very positive, but can become painful if that process goes too fast.

A very strict brown rice diet yang energises you so fast that before you realising it, you find yourself eating 6 oranges or a big ice cream. Afterwards you feel very guilty. Guilty, because you think you are not "strong willed " enough. But your body is your guide. Whatever happens to the body, it wants to achieve balance. Try to understand the body's cravings and the messages underneath. Try to adapt your food and lifestyle as well as possible. Often we have to look at which emotions we are holding and work on them to become our true self, to heal, to relax. So we make the body and our whole being the most important thing in our life. We start to treat ourself like a holy temple and don't misuse the body, either on a physical, or on an emotional level, as a bin. Be flexible with the food and if you eat something "unhealthy", try to eat small quantities and ENJOY it." La quantité tue la qualité " is a French saying. Eight principles and eight weeks to make a gradual change, can help you a lot.

WEEK ONE :

Give up all meat, sugar (chocolate, cookies, ice cream) and kitchen salt. The body will feel relieved. This excess of food makes the body suffer. For people with a sweet tooth, this can be really difficult, but if you stop meat and kitchen salt, at the same time, it'll be less difficult because two extremes keep each other in balance, you won't be attracted to extreme sweet food if you don't eat meat. It can help you to know what sugar does to the body. You can read " Sugar Blues" by William Dufty.

Stopping sugar means stopping cookies, soft drinks etc most beers (if they don't use pure malt), most of the commercial fruit juices, tomato ketchup and mustard (from your supermarket), bread (from the ordinary bakery), etc. Even tobacco and toothpaste contain sugar. Simple sugar adversely affects our health: white and brown sugar, cane sugar, sorbitol, aspartame, agave, maltitol, molasses, honey, etc. You can replace sugar with rice syrup, barley malt or amasaké. Dried apricots, raisins, apples, apple concentrate are a great alternative to sweeten your food with.

If it is difficult to stop eating meat, eat chicken once in a while a little, even better is fish. If you were eating meat twice a day, then eat it twice a week to start off with and gradually replace it with fish, beans (chickpeas, azuki's, lentils, black beans, etc), tempeh, tofu and seitan. Choose for a good quality sea salt to cook with.

Start writing your lifestory and take your time to do it. You can write for 20 minutes every day for the next few weeks. Don't write your parents story but own your feelings and let out all your fear, anger and sadness onto the paper.

WEEK TWO :

Choose sour dough bread (organic, or bio-dynamic) and don't use yeast in bread. Gradually try to eat less bread and eat more whole grains. If you eat bread, eat it with soup and/or plenty of vegetables. During the day take some deep breaths, deep breathing three times a day for 5 minutes provides the body with lots of oxygen, you'll relax, body functions will become better and your breathing controls our emotions.

WEEK THREE :

Replace potatoes gradually with brown rice, millet, barley, oats, buckwheat, rye, corn in the form of whole grains, spaghetti and noodles and occasionally with flakes and bread. Try to eat 6 servings a day of vegetables, not too much raw food and choose a wide variety of vegetables. Gradually eat less and less tomatoes, peppers, spinach, eggplant, potatoes or other nightshade plants. Take time to clean your kitchen, your fridge and your cupboards. You'll feel lighter and are making a big step in your life. Give non-healthy food away or just throw it away.

WEEK FOUR :

Eat one bowl of miso soup every day, and a little pressed salad, saurkraut or some pickles : pickled gherkins, takuan, sushi ginger or homemade pickles are very nice. Miso and pickles contain lots of lactobacilla and create a very healthy internal flora, cleanse the blood and help in cleansing all over the body. Apart from miso soup, try to have all kinds of soups on a regular basis.

Start doing some exercises in the morning. Every day 15-20 minutes stretching, walking, yoga, dancing, tai chi, chi-gongq or do-in will make a big difference to the body.

WEEK FIVE :

Replace all dairy products with tofu, mochi, miso (also white miso), shoyu, tahini, seeds and nuts and sometimes nut butter. Use a nice quality oil for example, sesame oil to give richness to your food. If you crave dairy, make tempura regularly and cook richer food with natural ingredients. For most people it is difficult to give up, as it is for baby's to give up mother's milk. If we want to become real human beings, we'd better give up cow's milk . We are what we eat. Milk is for the calf. In nature a dog doesn't drink from a cow or a monkey from a lion!!! If we use milk, in any form, on a daily basis, we 'll become a cow. Dairy food also includes butter and cream, yoghurt, eggs, milk, cheese. Remember that lots of cookies, chocolate, cake, etc contain dairy products. Dairy is the most mucus forming food and collects in all our cavities.

Look for cooking classes and commit yourself to become a very good cook. You'll understand more why you are doing this, you'll get lots of support, you will learn to organise yourself better, to work faster in the kitchen, to overcome cravings and to make delicious food for you and your family.

WEEK SIX :

Try to give up coffee and non-herbal teas. If possible give up all drugs and medication (talk to your doctor and macrobiotic consultant). See if you can gradually replace medication with herbs. Never stop

medication without talking to your doctor or your consultant who is in contact with your doctor. Stopping drugs, alcohol, coffee, medication and all other addictive food can cause withdrawal symptoms, so do it slowly if you use it every day. Use bancha tea, herbal teas, grain coffee and water as daily drinks and drink when you are thirsty. Make an appointment with a healer who can help you emotionally. Make sure you can trust the person and start to see him or her regularly so you can clear up all old emotional stuff and get rid of any addiction in order to become free.

WEEK SEVEN :

Avoid all refined food, preserved and frozen food. Make fresh and whole food every day and chew your food very, very well. Try not to overeat and not to eat three hours before going to bed. If you are really hungry, you'll be grateful with very simple food like pressure cooked brown rice, beans and vegetables. Make your food very colourful and tasty with natural seasonings like shoyu, mirin, miso, tahini, vegetable bouillon, lemon, ginger, horseradish, rice and ume vinegar, rice syrup, garlic, pesto and local herbs. Don't use hot spices on a regular basis such as pepper, curry and chilli. They are too cooling on the body in this climate. Make an appointment with someone who does bodywork. A nice massage with oil or a shiatsu massage every three or four weeks is what we need to look after our health. Our car needs a regular a service, we need a massage.

WEEK EIGHT :

Make sure you choose a very high quality of water to drink and to use in your cooking. Tap water contains lots of residues, hormones and chlorine (a carcinogen). Start to use seaweeds (kombu, nori, hiziki, wakamé, dulse, sea salad, aramé). Sea vegetables contain lots of minerals which are important to make strong bones and kidneys. By eating seaweed you get rid of all the excess heavy metals in your body.

Be grateful for what you achieve and pray, meditate or make every day a moment of silence in which you can feel your gratitude, ask for help and guidance on your path.

Generally speaking don't eat and live a life driven by fear. Don't be fearful to do the wrong things. We are all on our healing path and every act and step we are making is a lesson to be learnt. Don't feel guilty and obsessed by food. If you visit friends or a restaurant choose for the best food available. Fish instead of meat, rice instead of potatoes, eat lots of vegetables or soup. Eat fresh fruit for dessert. Be grateful for every meal.

I wish you very good luck with the changes you are making. I am very happy to help you further on your path, to give you more detailed advise and recommendations and to see you in a personal consultation or do regular emotional healing work. You can reach me through the Holistic Cooking School on 0044(0) 1803 762598 or email me on my personal e-mail address on : de.meridiaan@scarlet.be

With love,
Marijke