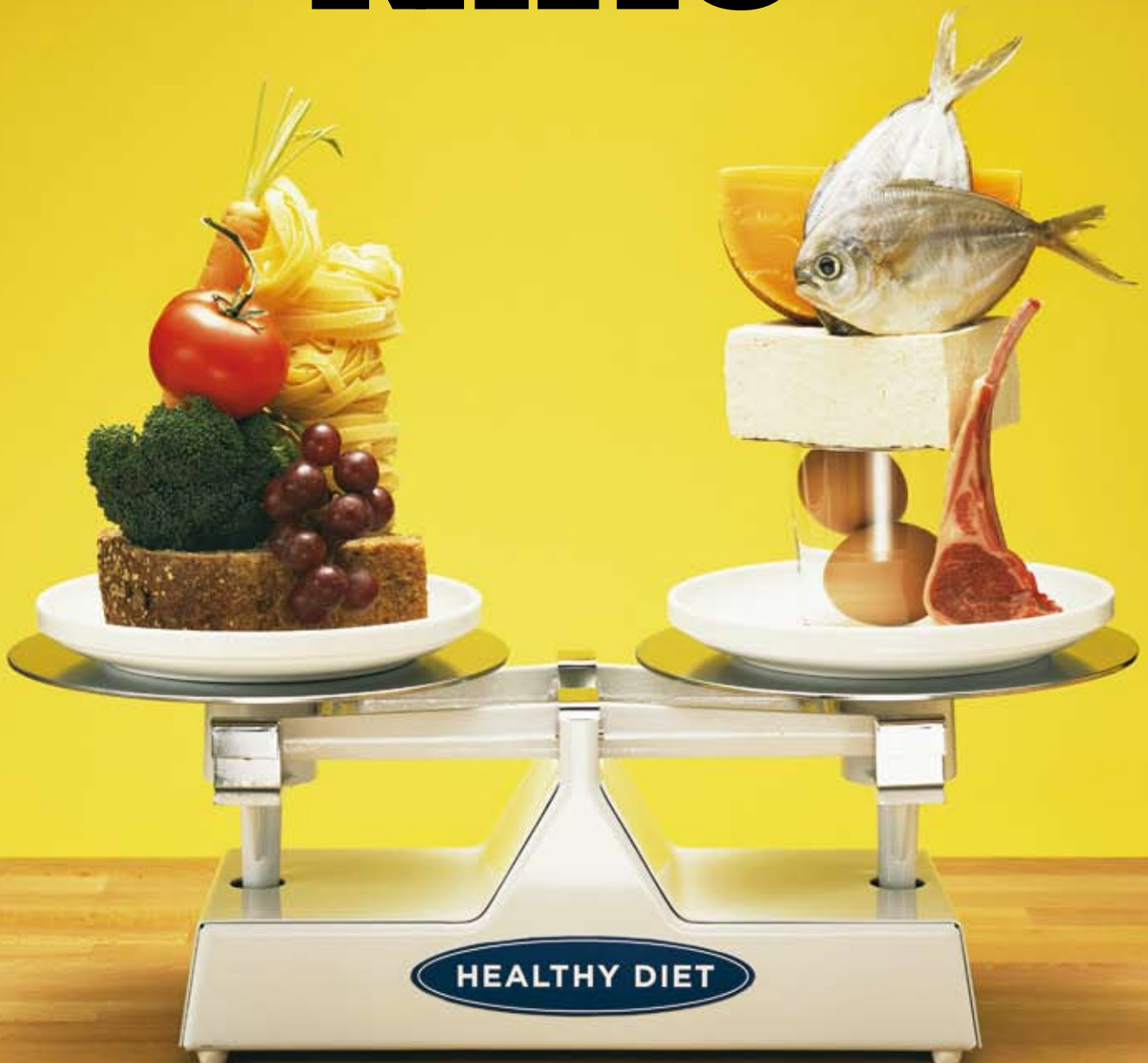


Jan Purser shares the one health secret that will keep your body youthful and full of good health.

THE PERFECT RATIO



How would you like to eat and live in such a fashion that seriously reduces the ageing of your body? How about maintaining a healthy weight and reducing your risk of developing heart disease, arthritis, dementia, diabetes and cancer? Or perhaps you or a family member are already dealing with one of these health problems and would love to reduce the symptoms? Many people believe that you have to live like a monk to keep truly healthy and this is not quite correct. Certainly having some monk-like qualities may help but it all comes down to a little simple maths.

Certain foods and lifestyle practices can create an acidic environment in your body. When this occurs, your body will age more quickly and be far more susceptible to developing disease. Excess acidity will also increase inflammation and pain in your body and you are much more likely to carry extra weight and feel fatigued and foggy headed.

If you already have arthritis or an autoimmune condition, for example, excess acid-forming foods may trigger a flare-up of symptoms. And, eating more alkalising foods can help reduce your symptoms. In fact, keeping a good balance of alkalising to acid-forming foods in your diet makes your body stronger.

The balancing act

There is a very simple ratio to set you well on the path to achieving a more alkaline state according to Kathy Harris, Sydney-based naturopath and university lecturer.

"If you're fit, well and exercise regularly, you can be a little less strict than someone with a chronic health condition," says Kathy.

"Your exercise and associated deep breathing will help alkalise your body."

For the fit and well, Kathy recommends ensuring at least two-thirds of your plate (diet) is filled with "lovely fresh alkalising vegetables and foods, including some raw vegies" and the remainder of your plate can include acid-forming foods. The good news is you don't have to give up favourite foods as it's all about getting the right mix.

"The people who especially need to watch acidity levels are those with inflammatory conditions, autoimmune conditions, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, cancer, and those who frequently get infections or who are mucous-producers," explains Kathy. For these people, Kathy recommends filling their plate at least three-quarters with alkalising foods.

Lay off the acid

"I try to make my patients aware if they are living an acidic lifestyle they will develop chronic diseases," says Dr Igor Tabrizian, a Perth-based diagnostic orthomolecular medicine practitioner.

He goes on to say that your mental state also affects acidity in your body and commented on a couple of his patients who tested their urine pH before and after a stressful event. To their amazement, they found that their acidity levels increased due to the stress of the event, confirming that stress is indeed acid forming.

Dr Tabrizian further comments, "watching violent TV shows and movies, listening to angry music and sitting at the computer until late at night, creating light toxicity, will all increase your body's acidity. It's important to return to the nurturing of the family and

yourself through balanced eating, visual aesthetics, calming music and meditation to increase alkalinity in the body."

Both Kathy and Dr Tabrizian emphasise that exercise along with deep breathing helps to create a more alkaline state in the body. As your body tends to purge excess acid when you're asleep, be sure to have enough good-quality sleep each night.

When using cookbooks, look for recipes that use lots of vegetables or increase the vegetable component to balance the remaining ingredients. For sweeter foods, use evaporated cane juice, raw honey or brown rice syrup in place of regular sugars.

When you take steps to alkalise your life you will feel and look more youthful, energetic and vibrant. Who could ask for more? ■

Alkalising activities

To simplify your life, and alkalise your diet at the same time, try:

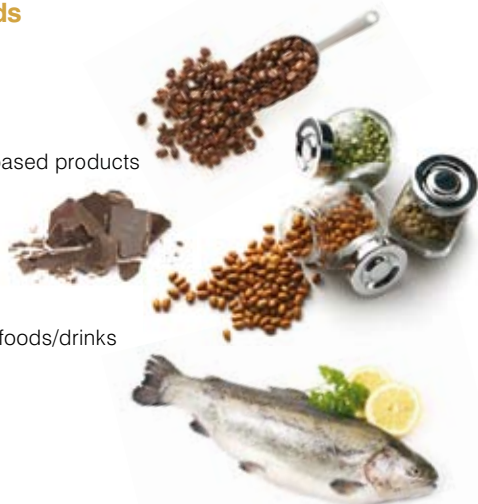
- Exercise
- Meditation
- Deep breathing
- Laughing
- Quitting smoking
- Stress management
- Relaxing music

Alkalinity affinity

Check out our food lists so you can start planning an improved approach to your food and lifestyle...

Acid-forming foods

- Meat and poultry
- Fish and seafood
- Eggs
- Dairy foods
- Grains and grain-based products
- Legumes
- Alcohol
- Coffee and tea
- Chocolate
- All other nuts
- Sugar and sugary foods/drinks
- Processed honey
- Maple syrup
- Fructose
- Ice-cream
- Preservatives



Alkalising foods

- Fresh vegetables
- Fresh fruit
- Extra virgin olive oil, flax oil
- Soy products
- Millet
- Sprouts
- Evaporated cane juice
- Herbal tea
- Fresh coconut
- Raw unblanched almonds
- Chestnuts
- Vegetable juices
- Raw honey
- Brown rice syrup
- Organic apple cider vinegar
- Green tea





Nectarines with yoghurt, honey and orange flower water

Serves 4

200g Greek-style yoghurt
1 tsp honey
¼ tsp orange flower water
6 nectarines, halved
2 tbsp brown sugar

Combine the yoghurt, honey and orange flower water and set to one side.

Put the halved nectarines on a tray and sprinkle them with the sugar, then put them under a hot grill (broiler). Cook until the nectarines are lightly golden and beginning to blister. Remove, and serve with the flavoured yoghurt.

Menu suggestions

Breakfast:

- Fresh fruit, natural yoghurt, brown rice syrup and flaked almonds
- Eggs with tomato, onion, spinach and asparagus

Lunch:

- Chunky vegetable, herb and lentil soup
- Nicoise salad (tuna, potato, cos leaves, green beans, olives, egg)

Dinner:

- Stir fried Asian greens with prawns
- Small serve spinach and ricotta ravioli with salad

Snacks:

- Fresh berries and a dollop of natural yoghurt mixed with a little raw honey



Recipes and images extracted from *marie claire Fresh + Fast*, by Michele Cranston (Murdoch Books) RRP \$39.95.

Asparagus and cos salad with smoked trout

Serves 4



12 asparagus spears, trimmed
1 small cos (romaine) lettuce, rinsed
a handful of flat-leaf (Italian) parsley leaves
1 celery stalk, finely sliced
4 radishes, finely sliced
1 spring onion (scallion), finely sliced
400g smoked trout
lemon mayonnaise

Bring a pot of salted water to the boil and blanch the asparagus until it is emerald green. Drain, then rinse under cold running water. Cut the spears in half. Slice the cos into thick strips and put on a serving platter.

Add the asparagus pieces, parsley leaves, celery, radish and spring onion. Break the smoked trout into bite-sized pieces and arrange over the salad. Drizzle with the lemon mayonnaise and season with black pepper.

Roast duck with a green mango salad

Serves 4

1 Chinese roast duck
2 green mangoes, julienned or grated
3 tbsp plum sauce
4 tbsp lime juice
1 tsp sesame oil

1 red large red chilli, seeded and chopped
a handful of coriander (cilantro) leaves
150g baby rocket (arugula) leaves

Remove the skin from the roast duck and cut it into thin strips with a pair of kitchen scissors. Lay the skin strips on a tray and set to one side. Remove the meat from the roast duck and shred it into thin strips.

Put the mango in a bowl and add the plum sauce, lime juice and sesame oil. Stir to combine, then add the chilli and coriander. Arrange the rocket on a serving platter, then top with the shredded duck meat. Cover with the dressed green mango.

Grill the duck skin until crisp, then drain on paper towel. Arrange the crisp skin on top of the mango and serve.



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