

AMAZE YOURSELF THIS YEAR

January 2016

Prevention

**This
Drink
Blasts
Fat**

Sweet 'n' Spicy
Tropical
Smoothie
p. 86

EAT MORE, WEIGH LESS

Our Super-Fast, Super-Easy Plan

**Walk Off
Your Belly**

Stop Your
Cravings

**Get 50%
Leaner + Fitter**

Plus

**Boost Your
Brainpower in
60 Seconds**

Improve
your odds
by choosing a
low-stress week
to break the
habit.

the addiction? (Coffee, tea, or kombucha, anyone?) You don't have to be a willpower warrior 24/7—only when you're in your danger zones.

TRACK YOURSELF LIKE A BLOODHOUND

Log how well your coping mechanisms are working using a program like GoalsOnTrack, which has a built-in journal and habit tracker, or with pen and paper. "Taking note of your behavior makes you aware of

your actions, so you're forced to make conscious decisions," Claiborn says.

TAKE A BRIBE

Positive reinforcement works for kindergartners on up. Reward yourself with a meaningful treat—a week-night movie, a spa visit, whatever gets you excited—for accomplishing 1 day, 3 days, a week without soda. Don't skip this step. It's key to motivation—and that's what will get you through. [»](#)

Get Your Sweet Fix without the (Real or Fake) Sugar

Life without soda might leave your taste buds yearning for sweetness. These simple flavor hacks keep your mouth—and the rest of your body—happy.



1 Add **vanilla extract**

While it's not actually sweet, vanilla reminds us of ice cream, cake, and other desserts. Add a few drops—or the contents of a vanilla bean—to tea, yogurt, oatmeal, nut butters, or smoothies.



2 Try **toasted coconut**

These flakes are naturally sweet and add nuttiness and crunch to breakfast or dessert. Opt for the large flakes over tiny shreds; more surface area means more flavor on your tongue.



3 Caramelize **onions**

If you're making tomato sauce or soup, skip the sugar and caramelize any onions in the recipe instead of sautéing them. Their natural sweetness makes a rich substitute.



4 Create contrast with **salt**

Since sugar and salt are polar opposites, a dash of salt can intensify sweetness. Try it on foods that are naturally a little sweet, like sweet potatoes, butternut squash soup, or sliced fruit.

eatclear



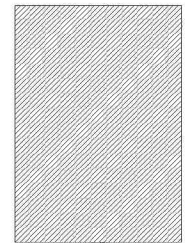
**YOUR
CHALLENGE**

Beat Your Soda Addiction

*That cold can of sucralose has quite the hold on you, huh?
Accept our 7-day challenge and finally get free.*

By Aviva Patz

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OPPOSITE PAGE: TATSURO NISHIMURA/GALLERY STOCK. THIS PAGE: DNY59/GETTY IMAGES

By now you've likely heard all the news about how soda is harming your body. (Quick recap of the latest evidence against even diet soda: It adds significantly to belly fat, weakens bones, and leads to metabolic syndrome, the cluster of high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and high cholesterol that can result in diabetes and heart disease.) You also likely

have firsthand experience with how hard it is to leave behind the caffeine high, sweet jolt, and comforting ritual of popping open a can.

Resolving to beat this not-so-harmless addiction is a great call for your health—and good reason to familiarize yourself with the seven top habit-breaking techniques known to science.



While research suggests it takes about 21 days to fully form a new habit, you'll find cravings will start diminishing after about 7 days, says psychologist James Claiborn, author of *The Habit Change Workbook*. Try all seven, then stick with the ones that help you crush the cans—for keeps.

WRITE YOUR MANIFESTO (IT TAKES 3 MINUTES)

Fold a piece of paper into four squares and jot down the pros and cons of quitting soda and the pros and cons of not quitting soda, one list per square, recommends Claiborn. You'll likely come up with some very compelling reasons to make the change. Then keep your notes handy. "When temptation arises, it helps to review why you don't want to give in to the addiction," Claiborn says.

REPLACE THE ADDICTION WITH SOMETHING LESS BAD FOR YOU

Most people can't just drop a bad habit—they replace it. If your soda jones is a caffeine thing, could you switch to coffee, tea, or dark chocolate? If drinking soda is helping to relieve boredom, how could you make things less dreary? Claiborn suggests opting for replacements that clash with the behavior you're changing. "If you're having coffee, you don't need to have soda at the same time, for example," he says. Same with taking a brisk walk.

USE WORDS LIKE THEY MATTER ('CAUSE THEY DO)

Quit with the "I can't"; instead, say "I don't drink soda," the same way vegetarians *don't* eat meat. A study in the *Journal of Consumer Research* found that when people used the words *I don't* to describe their temptation, they were less likely to choose a junky treat than people who used the words *I can't*. Researchers believe that saying "I don't" is psychologically empowering. The phrase implies that the decision is yours to make.

MAKE THE STRUGGLE PUBLIC

The more accountable you are to others, the more likely you are to stick it out (embarrassment is motivating, isn't it?). Recruit a buddy for taking walks or grabbing coffee as needed, or to give you the stink eye when you reach for a soda. The goal-setting app Coach.me allows you to invite friends to view your progress and leave comments as well as crowdsource encouragement. You can also put cash on the line with StickK, an app that charges you a predetermined penalty (that you set yourself) if you fail to reach your goal.

ID YOUR DANGER ZONES

Anticipate lapses in willpower and strategize how to deal. If you grab a diet soda because it's free in the lunchroom, that's a high-risk situation. Ask yourself, *What can I do tomorrow at that high-risk time to replace*

What's Really Going On?

Addressing what's truly driving your soda craving sets you up for success, says **Jacob Teitelbaum**, author of *The Complete Guide to Beating Sugar Addiction*. **Top 3 contenders:**

You're having PMS or are in perimenopause.

Inadequate progesterone or estrogen triggers cravings for sweets by cutting the feel-good brain chemicals serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine and leading to insomnia, headaches, fatigue, or mild depression.

FOOD WORKAROUND

Try edamame, since soy contains compounds called isoflavones that mimic estrogen in the body. If that doesn't cut

soda cravings, go for nature's sweet treats—an orange, a handful of berries, or two squares of dark chocolate.

Your blood sugar is low.

That means you're likely skipping meals or spacing them out too much, or you're not eating enough blood sugar-steadying protein.

FOOD WORKAROUND

Snack on raisins and nuts, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup at a time. The healthy fats in nuts slow absorption

of the raisins' sugars so you get back into balance and cravings stop. P.S. When you do have a meal, add grilled chicken or chickpeas to that pasta salad.

You're tired.

As in, you're short on sleep. As in, you keep going to bed too late.

FOOD WORKAROUND

Caffeinate instead with coffee or tea; both have a host of health benefits.



FELICIA PERRETTI/OFFSET

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FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: MITCH MANDEL, SPASTONOV/GETTY IMAGES, ERICKSON PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES, MITCH MANDEL



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