

## REDUCE CAFFEINE



The odd cuppa may not hurt, but too much caffeine hampers the absorption of essential minerals, raises your blood pressure and interferes with your sleep patterns. It causes your body to feel like it's under stress, by releasing adrenaline and making the heart beat faster. The more you drink, the more 'stress' your body is under.

Caffeine is an **addictive drug** that operates along the same lines as cocaine, amphetamines and heroin, to stimulate the brain. If you feel like you can't function without it and drink it everyday, then you are addicted to caffeine. Caffeine dehydrates your body and forces water out of your system, leading to loose stools on a regular basis.



Caffeine has a detrimental effect on your adrenal glands, the body's energy-producing glands. These glands respond by releasing adrenaline, the "fight or flight" hormone, which has a number of effects on your body: *Your pupils dilate, your breathing rises, your heart beats faster, your blood pressure rises, blood flow to the stomach slows, restricting digestion, your liver releases sugar into the bloodstream for extra energy that the body doesn't need, and your muscles tighten up, ready for action.*

Once the adrenaline wears off, you are left feeling tired and depressed, so you consume more caffeine to get your adrenaline going again, and there you continue the perpetual cycle of caffeine dependence. As you might imagine, having your body in a state of emergency all day long isn't very healthy. Over time your adrenal glands get more and more tired as caffeine continues to over-stimulate them, and you end up feeling like a tired horse forever being whipped!



**The half-life of caffeine in your body is about 6 hours.** Drinking a 300mg cup of coffee mid afternoon, will still leave 100 mg of that caffeine in your system by 9pm. You may be able to fall asleep, but your body will probably miss out on the benefits of deep sleep. That deficit adds up fast. Feeling worse for wear the next morning, you reach for more coffee. The cycle continues day after day. Short term, stimulation with caffeine may be pleasurable, but long term it can leave you feeling stressed, fatigued and addicted to its effects. Cut it down.



**The recommended intake of caffeine per day is 200-300 milligrams, equivalent to 2 cups of coffee.**



**A cup of tea contains 35 milligrams.  
A diet soft drink can contain over 40 milligrams.**



**A single painkiller can contain 50-200 milligrams!**

And finally, forget what you might have heard about caffeine helping your body burn fat. Yes it will raise your metabolism briefly, but it will cause your body more stress than good. Stick to your exercise program and follow the rules of this book instead, and you will succeed!

## SIMON'S TIPS: CAFFEINE



**Start by reducing the number of cups of coffee or soft drinks that you drink daily, rather than cutting them out completely.** Caffeine constricts the blood vessels in your brain and decreases circulation, so when you cut out caffeine the circulation to your brain and digestive system suddenly rises, which may lead to severe headaches as well as constipation or bowel upset. So take its reduction gradually.

**Try to limit any coffee consumption to the morning.** Try not to drink it after midday and avoid tea after 5pm, so that your sleep patterns start to improve at night. The effects of caffeine can last for several hours after consumption.

**Go 'Decaff'!** If you still enjoy the taste and social aspect of coffee, go for a de-caffeinated option, with organic milk and no sugar. Caffeine-free soft drinks are ok in moderation but are still carbonated and sugared.

**Tea contains caffeine too.** Try one of the following instead: peppermint, green, or herbal. They are caffeine-free and also good for aiding your body's digestion.

**Don't brew your normal tea so strongly.** Rather than let the teabag sit in your cup for several minutes, let it colour and then remove.

**Withdrawal from coffee can cause headaches, lethargy and a feeling of being 'washed out'.** This will only be temporary, but it is vital that you give your body as much support as possible during this period by keeping well hydrated and following your dietary plan. Drink plenty of water.

**Dilute your coffee.** Opt for a latte with non-fat milk rather than an espresso.

**Switch alternate cups of coffee for pure juice or water.** If your daily caffeine intake is fairly high, try to substitute every other cup of coffee you would drink for something caffeine free. Slowly start to swing the balance from coffee refreshment to alternatives.

**Be aware that many medications contain caffeine.** Because caffeine has analgesic properties (painkilling), it is used in many pills and over the counter medications.

**DON'T rely on caffeine-fuelled energy drinks!** Drinking these is like shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted! Chances are that your initial energy lull will have been caused by the wrong food choices. Drinking one of these 'energy booster' drinks will only add to the problem, because they are a poor dietary choice in themselves - high in sugar and caffeine, low in health and wellbeing benefits!

**Finally, don't make matters worse by overdoing the sugar and cream!** Drinking too much coffee is one thing, but adding sugar to the equation only makes this drink more potent in messing up your blood sugar and your metabolism. Sugar + cream = extra calories.