

Get Bikini-Ready

9 ways to slim down this summer—safely and naturally

BY MICHELE BURKLUND, NMD

Say hello to summer this year with your best body ever! Become in-tune with your body, halt sugar cravings in their tracks, improve digestion, nourish your metabolism, lose weight, and feel vibrant just in time for the sunshine. We've designed a complete mind and body guide to help you look more radiant, feel more confident, and get ready for swimsuit season. Just try these powerful techniques.

Halt Sugar Cravings: A plant called *Gymnema sylvestre*, aka "the sugar destroyer," will help stop sugar cravings in their tracks. Popular in Ayurvedic medicine, gymnema works on the body in two ways: it actually reduces the perception of sweetness inside the mouth and also shows potential to regulate blood glucose levels. This will, in turn, decrease cravings for sweets. Try it by putting several drops of a tincture on your tongue. And if you still try to eat that piece of chocolate, it will taste like chalk! You can also use gymnema capsules.

Product Recommendation:
Himalaya Gymnema
Sugar Destroyer



Balance Bacteria: Your intestinal microbiota is as unique as you are. It's estimated that the human gut contains around 100 trillion cells, equaling 2-5 pounds of bacteria. The latest research is focusing on a possible link between the diversity of microbiota and weight gain. In fact, the *World Journal of Gastrointestinal Pathophysiology* published an article in November 2015 discussing the various ways that gut microbiota could play a role in weight gain—including linking specific strains of bacteria to an increased risk of obesity. Although more research is needed in this area, taking a high quality probiotic that includes diverse strains of beneficial bacteria can help improve your digestion, and it may also help you maintain a healthy weight.

Product Recommendation:
Garden of Life
Dr. Formulated Probiotics
Fibiotic 50 Billion



Nourish the Thyroid: This tiny butterfly-shaped gland performs many vital roles in the body, including regulating metabolism through the rate at which food is converted into energy. An article from Harvard Health Publications stated that 13 percent of women between the ages of 35 and 65 will experience hypothyroidism (the body doesn't produce enough active thyroid hormone) during their lifetime. Brazil nuts have the highest natural source of selenium, which supports thyroid health by providing the building blocks for the conversion of T4 (the inactive thyroid hormone) into T3 (the active form). Eat 1-2 nuts a day to support a healthy metabolism.



Product Recommendation:
NOW Real Food
Whole, Raw Brazil
Nuts



Add Avocados: Eating an avocado could be just the solution to hold back hunger. In fact, the *Nutrition Journal* published a study that found that eating just a half of one of these yummy fruits can decrease appetite by 40 percent for up to three hours. Avocados are loaded with unsaturated fats, contain the highest amount of protein in any fruit, and have more potassium than bananas. Pack some avocados along with spices such as paprika or garlic for an on-the-go snack, slice some into a salad, or add avocado to a smoothie.

Slow It Down: The stresses of life have changed dramatically over the centuries, but the body's response remains the same. A big presentation or a fast-approaching deadline produces the same stress reaction in the body that being attacked by a bear did in prehistoric times. Cortisol, the body's main stress hormone, can be helpful in the short term, but chronic stress disrupts the body's balance and can lead to weight gain, particularly in the abdominal area. So, how do we decrease cortisol levels in today's stress-saturated world? An article published in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition* revealed that magnolia bark extract and phellodendron bark extract reduced levels of cortisol and also decreased levels of perceived daily stress in a group of competitive athletes over a four-week period. Studies have also shown that magnolia bark can decrease symptoms of depression,

anxiety, and PMS. To reduce stress even more, set aside time each day to relax, breathe, and unwind. Sleep is another powerful stress reducer. Aim for eight hours each night in a fully dark room—turn off your TV, and put that blinking phone in a drawer, not on your nightstand.

Product Recommendation:
Source Naturals
Theanine Serene
with Relora



Mindful Eating: Stop rushing through your meals. Directing attention and intention to eating can have profound results. This practice can reduce cravings, increase your enjoyment of food, and put you back in tune with your body. Embrace every morsel while focusing on the taste, texture, and smell of each bite.

A 2015 study performed in France revealed that people who focused on the present moment while being aware of their food without judgment were more likely to maintain a healthy weight than the control group. Try eating in silence, turn off the television, and stop multitasking to enjoy your meal.



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Start with Protein:

Forget low-fat and low-carb fad diets; protein is the fuel your body needs in the morning to feel energized throughout the day. Eating a high-protein breakfast can put you on the fast track for lasting success. A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* in 2013 compared three different groups who ate no breakfast, a normal-protein breakfast, or a high-protein breakfast to measure its relationship to obesity. The study found that the high-protein breakfast group had the greatest response to beneficial alterations in appetite and hormonal signals that control and regulate food intake. Mix up an omelette with your



favorite veggies, blend a smoothie with protein powder, or enjoy Greek yogurt with berries and nuts.

Product Recommendation: Nature's Way Metabolic Reset

Drink More Water: Our bodies are 60 percent water, and it's essential to every cell. Staying hydrated can fend off fatigue, improve cognition, keep skin looking fresh, and just might help with weight loss. A study published in *Obesity: A Research Journal* using overweight or obese middle-aged adults concluded that drinking two cups of water before each meal can increase weight loss compared to a low-calorie diet alone. Drinking water before meals was shown to increase feelings



Product Recommendation: VOSS Artesian Water Still and Sparkling waters

Plan Ahead: Stop ravenous cravings before they strike with proper planning. Create a weekly meal plan, go to the grocery store with a list, and stock up on healthy on-the-go snacks such as nuts. Want to really track your progress? Keep a food journal and write down your daily consumption. This practice will keep you aware and more in tune with your body.

Michele Burkund, NMD, graduated from the prestigious Bastyr University in Seattle. "I have no doubt that the power of natural healing can enhance anyone's life at whatever stage or age they are," says Burkund, who specializes in helping neurological patients. Visit healthyfashionista.com to learn more about Burkund and read her entertaining and informative blogs.

Strawberry Beet Smoothie

Makes about 2 cups or 16 oz. (1-2 servings)

Combine all ingredients, blend until smooth:

- 10-12 frozen strawberries
- 1 small or medium raw red beet
- 2 tbsp. Udo's Choice 3-6-9 Oil Blend
- A handful of goji berries (optional)
- ½ medium lemon (preferably Meyer), juiced
- 1 tsp. fresh ginger, minced or finely grated
- ½ cup of cold water



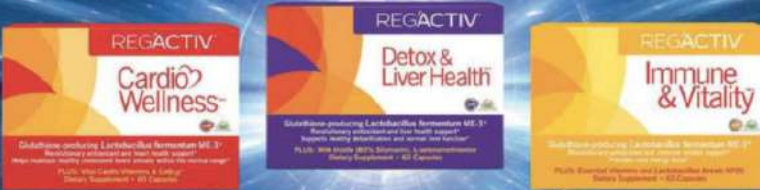
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