

# **14-Day Sugar Detox Challenge**



**JAMES HOLLYWOOD**

**HOLLYWOODALLSTARFITNESS.COM**

# Your Plan

## For the 14 days:

Since it takes about two weeks for your body to overcome sugar cravings and withdrawal, you will focus on:

- **Cutting out ALL added sugar, artificial sugars, and white flour** - check the label for less than 3g of sugar. Look at the ingredients and if you see anything with sugar or ending in "ose," there is likely added sugar
- **Reducing natural sugars and processed foods** to avoid spikes in blood sugar and cravings. The goal isn't to cut out sugar entirely - healthy foods contain small amounts of sugar - but you are limiting sugar for now so you can stabilize blood sugar and overcome cravings. Stick with whole grains (look for at least 3g of fiber) and vegetables for carbs and limit fruit to just a couple servings a day for now.
- **Eat More Fat, Protein and Vegetables** - With the decrease in sugar and carbs, you will need to make a conscious effort to eat more fat, protein and get your carbohydrates from vegetables. Include fat and protein in every meal and eat until you're full to help curb your appetite and ease cravings. Head to the grocery store and stock up on lots of quality fats, protein, and veggies.

## After the 2 week:

- You will add back in more natural sugars (fruits) after the first two weeks.
- You can add back in SOME added-sugar foods after 2 weeks, although you may not even want it!

*Small changes can make a BIG difference!*



# First things first...

## Understanding Sugar

Everything you eat falls into one of four categories: carbs, fats, proteins, and alcohol.

No matter how you slice it - we all need carbs, fats, and proteins.

Sugar is a type of carbohydrate that is easy to digest.

The body breaks carbohydrates down into sugars on the cellular level and gives us energy.

We need sugar to make up DNA, we use sugar for energy, and store sugar for fuel later.

Sugar is a fundamental molecule in biology.

Sugar is not bad - but it is not a "health food."

For most people, a little bit of sugar fits just fine into an overall healthy diet pattern.

But, many times we are eating more sugar than we realize.

And over-consumption of ANY food can lead to excess weight gain.

It is important to get your carbohydrates (that have naturally occurring sugars) from natural sources - like plants - versus processed foods.

Specifically, high-fructose corn syrup, which was first introduced in the 1970s, is processed. It is produced by converting glucose (the basic sugar used by the muscle cells to move) to fructose (which is 1.5x sweeter than regular sugar).

Processed foods often have a lot of added sugar and are highly palatable - which make them hard to stop eating.

We digest and absorb the energy from processed foods very quickly and easily, the added sugar over-stimulates the reward/pleasure centers in our brain, and we tend to overeat these foods.

This makes sugar physiologically and psychologically addictive. And it is tough to break sugar addiction! But it is doable!

Opting for natural carbohydrates (like fruits and vegetables) for fuel, instead of processed foods with added sugars, limits these responses.

These choices also ensure that you are getting beneficial vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients!

# Artificial Sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners are food-like products designed to mimic the taste and flavor of sugar and other sweeteners... with minimal amounts of sugar and calories.

For a very long time, it was believed that because these “fake sugars” added zero-calories to our diet, they were a better choice.

You’ll often find artificial sweeteners in foods labeled as “sugar free,” “no sugar added,” or “diet”.

Research continues to show an association between increased consumption of artificial sweeteners and certain health conditions, such as cancer and diabetes.

Also, most artificial sweeteners are several times sweeter than traditional sugar.

**For example, Splenda is almost 600x as sweet as sugar. That’s just craaazy.**

This can cause your taste buds to get used to overly sweet foods and make you MORE addicted to sweet foods.

Try to cut out artificial sweeteners completely!





# Tips for Eating Whole Foods



Whole foods provide nutritional value (vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, water), are naturally occurring, and are free from additives or other artificial substances.

Processed foods are pre-packaged items you typically find in the grocery store that have been modified from their original, whole-food form. Preservatives have been added and the original natural food has gone through some kind of process to make it last longer and/or taste better.

Processed foods are highly cravable, immediately gratifying, and easy to over-consume quickly (and often cheaply). Refined sugar is also found in MANY processed foods, which is what makes them taste so delicious!

## **A few good examples of whole vs. processed foods:**

- 👉 Oranges vs. OJ
- 👉 Steel cut oats vs. Cereal
- 👉 Peanuts vs. most peanut butters
- 👉 Strawberries vs. store-bought strawberry jam
- 👉 Whole wheat grains vs. whole wheat bread



A background image of a bowl filled with a fresh salad. The salad includes dark green spinach leaves, bright red cherry tomatoes, and pieces of cooked, light-colored chicken. The bowl is made of a light-colored material, possibly wood or bamboo. The overall lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the food.

# **FOUR QUICK TIPS FOR EATING WHOLE FOODS**

Ask yourself: How was the food made?

Found in nature + has gone through little or no processing

Free from additives or other artificial substances

If bought in the store, has just a few ingredients + you can actually pronounce all the ingredients

# Set Your Environment Up for Success

Go to your kitchen and throw out or give away any sugary or processed foods.

Check the nutrition labels on everything. If the food has more than a couple grams of sugar (or if it has white flour, like pasta or potato chips), get rid of it.

When sugar cravings hit, they hit hard.

Relying on self-control or will power can be very challenging - possibly impossible - in an unhealthy environment.

By creating an environment that doesn't require us to have to exert willpower, healthy choices become convenient and normal options.

Setting your environment up for success is essential.

We make thousands of decisions a day. And, whether we realize it or not, our environment and social settings influence those decisions.

If we set our environments up to support the choices we want to make, we will find it easier to make those choices.

Believe it or not, our "will power" can fade the more we have to practice it. A stressful day at work can make you just want to come home and grab a bag of chips in front of the tv and not have to think about anything.

And if you are around people who are eating pizza and beer every night, it is a lot easier to join in than go make something healthy.

Relying on self-control or will power can be very challenging - possibly impossible - in an unhealthy environment.

By creating an environment that doesn't require us to have to exert willpower, healthy choices become convenient and normal options.

# Withdrawal + How To Beat Sugar Cravings

**The second week without sugar can actually be the most difficult.**

After a few days without sugar, the cravings are going to hit.

You might experience:

- Decreased energy
- Mood swings
- Cravings for carbs and sugar
- Headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Brain fog

This is your body going through sugar withdrawal.

Withdrawal is HARD, but it will pass. The payoff will come and you'll feel better than ever before.

## **HEALTHY SNACKS**

Be sure to keep easy, healthy high-fat, low-carb snack handy when craving hit!

The moment you feel like you want - or need - some sugar or carbs, grab one of these quick, high-fat snacks (ex: cheese, nuts, avocado, eggs, hummus)

This strategy makes a bigger difference than you might think!

## **DRINK LOTS OF WATER**

Water can help you feel fuller and often times, after drinking water, you will realize you are not hungry, it is just your brain wanting something sweet.

## **EAT REGULARLY**

To avoid crashes or binges, eat every 3-4 hours.

## **GO FOR A WALK**

Focus on moving your body and feeling grateful for all that you have - get your mind off sugar! :)



# Planning for Hard Times



Setting up your home environment for success and overcoming physical and psychological withdrawal from sugar for a limited time is one thing, but what about social settings out of your control?

You certainly cannot never go to a birthday party or out for ice cream with your kids again.

## **IT ALL COMES DOWN TO MINDSET!**

Just like you train your body, you must train your mind. Choosing to be positive is one of the most empowering mindsets to have - but it takes time and practice.

Our reaction to a situation elicits a number of emotional and physical responses.

Negative thoughts and feelings can elicit stress hormones that make us feel irritable, cause cravings, and disrupt our sleep.

But negative thoughts are a part of life.

Your brain may want to eat sugar, but allow yourself to feel that and resist the urge.

Just because you have a feeling to eat, does not mean you need to apply it.

Learning to process emotions and feel the hunger and cravings, will help you tune into your body and your hunger cues so that you are not constantly resisting and reacting to them.

## **Visualizing Success**

Recognize that if you cannot visualize yourself in that situation saying no to sugar, it will be VERY HARD to actually say no once you are there.

Think about when you go to buy a car. You find the perfect car in the perfect color and you think that it's very unique, nobody out there has a color and a car like that. You certainly don't recall seeing any of these on the road before. And then as you're driving home, you see the exact same color and exact same model as the car you have. You now see more and more of these cars in your life because your brain is now wired to think about and look for these cars.

Your brain has been rewired to look for that car and now you see it everywhere.

That is how it is when we visualize our success. We see ourselves living that way and identify as that person.

This gives us a destination to head towards.

In a Russian study, scientists compared four groups of Olympic athletes in terms of physical and mental training schedules:

- 🌟 Group 1: 100% physical training
- 🌟 Group 2: 75% physical training + 25% mental training
- 🌟 Group 3: 50% physical training + 50% mental training
- 🌟 Group 4: 25% physical training + 75% mental training

Group 4 (with 75% mental training) performed the best.

The mental training focused on visualizing success in the first person and present tense. Versus normal daydreaming which is typically done in the third person and the future tense.

Athletes and coaches have been using visualization techniques for a long time.

Muhammad Ali saw himself victorious long before the actual fight. And Michael Jordan always took the last shot in his mind before he ever took one in real life.

Visualizing gives you something to work towards and allows you to recognize what you want when you see it. It helps you to focus and not get sidetracked with distractions.

I challenge you to visualize yourself with your goal achieved - maybe you have the body you want.

Take a moment to feel what it is like to have it.

You cannot achieve anything in your “outer world” until you first see it in your “inner world.”

**The most important thing when it comes to a goal is to identify as the person who believes in the achievement of it.**

## **Got a big event coming up? Try this...**

Before you go to the event where sugar will tempt you (let's say it is out to ice cream with the family), picture what you would look like at this even NOT eating the ice cream.

Visualize what you are doing. Maybe you are drinking a bottle of water and talking to your spouse about the weekend plans. Everyone enjoys their ice cream. You drink water and enjoy their company. Then everyone cleans up and goes home.

Thinking it through takes away the unknown. If you can't even imagine not joining in on the family ice cream or birthday celebrations right now, that's ok. Keep trying.

# Your Brain on Sugar

## **There are two parts to the brain: primitive brain and prefrontal cortex**

The primitive brain is designed to seek pleasure, preserve energy, and avoid pain.

And the prefrontal cortex can plan and make decisions ahead of time and have delayed gratification.

Back in the day, the primitive brain worked really well for us... We would seek pleasure through food, shelter, comfort, relationships, sex, worship, and play.

Hundreds of years ago, our bodies preserved energy so that we could survive. We hunted or gathered our food, build our houses, fought disease and injuries without proper doctors, did not have heat or electricity. Our bodies were meant to preserve energy to survive.

The prefrontal cortex must overcome the primitive brain which seeks pleasure and instant gratification.

Saying “no” to late night snacking because it will be worth it in the long run is HARD. We are delaying instant gratification and suppressing the natural way our brain works.

As humans, we are the one species that are able to use our brains to make decisions and plan ahead.

And it is important to understand the brain when it comes to making decisions.

The decision to not eat sugar (prefrontal cortex) and then all of the decisions every day about what you will eat and do (many times this is the primitive brain that seeks immediate comfort and instant gratification).

Do you see why it is so HARD to lose weight?!

This is why planning ahead is so important.

## **Dopamine**

I also want to talk about a neurotransmitter called dopamine which is responsible for creating that feeling of “desire” that happens before the reward.

So when we desire food, especially sugar, dopamine is driving us and creating that urge. Dopamine creates the feeling and motivation that we “have to have” that candy bar.

Once we get the pleasure of the reward, the dopamine stops. So, dopamine drives us to seek false pleasure. The anticipation of the reward is driving the action.

However, over time, dopamine will require bigger and better rewards.

If you are deprived of something, you will create dopamine for it. For example, if you have been camping and deprived of a warm bed, you will desire it more than if you have been sleeping in a warm bed every night.



So, if the dopamine is directed at sweets, you are going to need better and more sweets to satisfy the desire. If it is directed at alcohol, you are going to need better and more alcohol to satisfy the desire.

The key is to manage the steady flow of dopamine which produces steady success and steady rewards.

If you continuously give yourself false pleasures of sugar or alcohol, you are not managing your dopamine and you will always desire more.



## If you are still struggling, try this...

**Step 1:** Get a journal and write down exactly what you will eat tomorrow.

Choose the best foods you can. Avoid sugar and flour because they tend to create cravings and false hunger signals. So eliminating them will make the execution of your plan easier.

**Step 2:** Execute your plan and eat exactly what you planned to eat. No more. No less.

This means you are choosing to eat with your prefrontal cortex and not making decisions as you go with your primitive brain.

If you struggle with this at the beginning, make your plan less strict so that you can stick to your plan and your word to yourself.

**Step 3:** Aim for progress not perfection.

# Sample Menu

## Breakfast

Two eggs, tomatoes, a piece of whole-grain toast (at least 3g of fiber and less than 3g sugar) with butter and coffee black or with a little cream.

## Snack

Hard boiled egg, string cheese, and carrots

## Lunch

A salad with chicken, vegetables, cheese and oil and vinegar

## Snack

A handful of almonds or cashews and a piece of fruit

## Dinner

Grilled salmon, Brussel sprouts (cooked with olive oil) and cauliflower rice

## Dessert

Unsweetened yogurt with a few strawberries, sunflower seeds and cinnamon

Tea with lemon

