

5 RADICAL STEPS FOR *Your Healthiest Summer Body*



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Summer is here! Are you excited about this or are you feeling a quiet, internal sense of dread? Does the thought of having to wear shorts and sleeveless tops make you cringe? Does the idea of putting on a bikini right now make you want to crawl back under the covers and hibernate until next winter? Does the very thought of hot weather, social gatherings and your winter body just make you feel incredibly uncomfortable? Yeah, I get it! That is exactly how I have felt more times than I wish to admit!

It is about this time of year that I would realise it had been a long, cold winter. Not only did my skin glow in the dark, it had also “mysteriously” developed new lumps and bumps and somehow, my butt had become a whole lot bigger than my yoga pants had allowed me to believe! The very first time I would put on a bikini for the season, I died a little bit inside. I felt like a frumpy snowman and dreaded someone inviting me to come chill by the pool. Worst of all, I felt like I had started way too many summers feeling like this!

But not anymore! I now start every summer ready to rock a bikini from day one and while eating well and exercising definitely help, I have discovered that there are some other amazing, less known, tools that have incredible results and I want to share them with you!

These 5 radical steps will help you:

- Feel confident in your own skin
- Feel amazing in your summer clothes and bikini
- Lose weight easily and enjoy making healthy choices
- Tone and tighten your body
- Reduce cravings for sugar and carbs
- Discover what it takes to create a sustainable healthy life

I want you to feel excited about summer, to look forward to putting on summer outfits and to feel comfortable in your body and bikini while at the beach. I want you to love your body, look and feel your absolute best and most of all, I want to share with you the tools to looking great not only for summer, but for life!

Ready to find out what they are? Then let's get started!

1. Sleep Yourself Sexy.

A good night's sleep is so much more than waking up feeling refreshed and energized. It is also essential for avoiding unnecessary weight gain, managing our cravings and keeping our metabolism fired up.

When we don't get enough sleep we don't get a chance to fully rest and restore. With adequate sleep our body has time to heal itself, repair and regenerate and more importantly, take a well-deserved break from powering us through our busy lives. It is this very "rest and restore" process that allows us to sleep ourselves sexy.

The more sleep-deprived we are, the higher our levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Cortisol plays a vital role in telling our brains we need to eat because energy stores are getting low. This is wonderful. Thank you cortisol. The one flaw in this process is that it doesn't necessarily make us ravenous for kale salad! When our body is under stress from lack of sleep or otherwise, we are drawn to energy-dense, high-carb foods also known as comfort food and sugar.

Why? Because our body wants energy and it wants it fast!

Carbs, sugar and fatty foods convert to energy very quickly. These types of foods also stimulate our brain to release the happiness hormone serotonin, which helps us feel calm, relieve the stress our body feels and reduce tension.

Second to that, leptin, a hormone that tells our brain "I'm full, stop eating," is significantly reduced when we are sleep deprived. Leptin plays a significant role in appetite control and metabolism. When leptin levels are low, hunger is not being naturally suppressed causing our appetite and cravings to increase. Cue desires for chocolate and sugary snacks!

If that's not bad enough...

The extra calories we're consuming from these unhealthy foods is stored and converted into belly fat!

So get yourself into a consistent sleep pattern, get adequate sleep and sleep yourself sexy!

Know your sleep quota. Do you feel refreshed and energetic after 5 hours sleep? Perhaps 8? Or maybe it's 10? Make an effort to discover your own unique sleep quota. Take note of how you feel after varied amounts, what kind of foods you crave and how often you feel hungry. Adjust accordingly and sleep yourself toward a beautiful, healthy body!

2. Skip the Gym and Try Yoga.

We all know that part of being healthy is moving our body regularly. When we think about working out and exercising we often think of running or going to the gym. These are great options for losing weight and toning our body, but did you know that you could get the same results and more from practicing yoga? Not only can we tone and strengthen our body, but we can also start to promote beautiful glowing skin, reduce our cravings for unhealthy food, lower our stress levels, strengthen our immune system while also finding deep inner strength and confidence.

Yoga challenges us in a unique way that combines relaxation with building a beautiful, strong body from the inside out. I first tried yoga as a complement to running. I thought it could help me stretch my tired muscles and increase my flexibility. What I had not bargained for were the abs I built, the shoulders I sculpted and the changes in my confidence and self esteem!

Variety in our workouts is key to keeping our body challenged so that we get into great shape. Here are three great reasons why you could skip the gym once in a while and roll out a yoga mat instead to help you feel confident, strong and healthy this summer.

1. Yoga helps detox our body

As we twist, bend and stretch our way through a yoga class we massage our organs and an incredible internal cleanse takes place. We stimulate digestion, increase drainage in our lymphatic system and move blood through our body. This assists our body in removing toxins and waste, improving our energy levels and mood and best of all, we start to promote glowing, healthy, beautiful skin from the inside out.

2. Yoga helps to manage our cravings

There is a very good reason you see yogi's sipping on green juice after a class. Research has found that regular yoga practice strengthens our body-mind connection making us more mindful eaters. This increased awareness helps us to tune in to our emotions involved with certain cravings and to slow down to make healthier choices. This is an essential skill for reaching our perfect weight. When we can hear what it is that our body really needs, we can start to manage our weight in a more effective way.

3. Yoga helps to reduce stress

We talked about how stress inside our body affects our weight. Yoga not only helps us escape our busy day for an hour, but it helps promote weight loss, too. Yoga involves combining poses with the breath and other breathing exercises. Full deep breaths stimulate our parasympathetic nervous system, which tells our body to calm down and relax and actually lowers our cortisol levels! Goodbye stress and weight gain. Hello relaxation and healthy summer body!

3. Eat Chocolate.

Yes. That's right! Eat chocolate. But not any kind of chocolate, eat cacao.

Cacao is the purest form of chocolate we can consume and it comes from the seeds of the fruit of the cacao tree. These seeds are then either chopped up and turned into cacao nibs or cold pressed and turned into cacao powder. The process of cold pressing the seeds keeps the living enzymes in the cacao and contributes to its many amazing health benefits. Cacao is an excellent source of healthy fat, vitamins, minerals, fiber, natural carbs and protein.

So how can eating cacao help you create a healthy summer body? Here's how.

1. Magnesium for a beautiful strong body

Magnesium is a mineral needed for more than 300 biochemical reactions in our body and is key to muscle and nerve function. Because of its high magnesium content, cacao helps build strong bones and improve muscle structure. What does that mean for us? It supports our efforts to build a lean, sexy body as we exercise.

2. Antioxidants for anti-aging and sulfur for beautiful skin

Not getting enough antioxidants in our diet affects our health and how fast we age. High antioxidant levels in our body support the cardiovascular and nervous systems by preventing free radicals from forming keeping us both healthy and young. Cacao has more antioxidants than blueberries, red wine, and green tea! Cacao also contains the beauty mineral sulfur, which helps our body build strong nails and hair, promotes beautiful skin, and detoxifies the liver.

3. Feel good food

Remember that we said our body craves sugar and carbs when we're stressed because these foods stimulate our brain to release our happiness hormone serotonin? Well, cacao naturally raises the level of serotonin in our brain. This helps us start to reduce feelings of stress, and serotonin also acts as an anti-depressant, helps reduce symptoms of PMS, and promotes a general sense of well-being. Chocolate that loves you back? Yes, please!

Cacao or Cocoa? Cacao is not to be confused with cocoa. While they look similar, cocoa lacks the health benefits of cacao as it is heavily processed, roasted at high temperatures and has sugar added to it. The heat used to create cocoa changes the molecular structure of the bean and lowers the nutritional value. One last thing, with all of the amazing health benefits we should also note that cacao is high in fat and calories. Be sure to consume in moderation and consider consuming it as part of your 20 in an 80/20 lifestyle. No idea what I am talking about? Read on.

4. Love Yourself Healthy.

Earlier this year I broke my arm and was suddenly forced to step out of my busy life and slow down. I felt tired and low on energy almost every single day and as a right-handed person with a broken right arm, things were challenging to say the least. Preparing food to eat was one of them, so I ate food that was quick and easy to prepare (aka not so healthy or nourishing) and slowly but surely the food and lack of exercise caused my body to take on a different shape. My pants became tight, really tight, and my belly began to jiggle as I walked. About five weeks into my recovery I was invited out to dinner with friends and I found myself faced with having to dress up with the few clothes I had in my closet that I could comfortably sit down in. I found myself staring into my closet flicking through clothes and an all too familiar feeling started to come over me.

I realised in that moment that I had a choice. I could succumb to this familiar feeling and dive into a world where I hated myself for gaining weight, hated my body for the way it looked and start to feel self conscious, fat and ugly.

Or, I could choose love instead.

I could love my body because we'd been through some shit together and we were doing our best to heal. We'd chosen to eat chocolate and ice cream (tubs of it) together when I'd felt tired. We'd decided to stay in bed to rest rather than push to get up and work out. I could love my body because it was mine, because the condition it was currently in could be temporary (if I so chose it) and more importantly, I could just simply choose love instead!

First and foremost, we need to start to love our bodies as they are right now. Why? Why not?! What good does hating your body do? Start to see your body as your friend, not your enemy. Without your beautiful body you would have no life here on this planet. You would not be able to experience the wonder of life every single day. Choose to love your body as it is right now and then, love your body even more by taking good care of it, by exercising it to give it strength, by feeding it nourishing food so that it has the energy to help you chase after your goals. Let's love our bodies into change rather than hate ourselves different.

Choose to approach weight loss and exercise as loving, kind acts towards yourself. This makes both so much easier to do, so much more fun and you get to enjoy your life now. We need to find pleasure, happiness and joy now. You are not more lovable thinner. You know why? Cause there is actually less of you! ;) But seriously, you have a choice today to love your body and to make any changes you desire. Just make those choices with love and enjoy this life you have now!

Try love on for size. What mindset do you have about your body? What things do you say to yourself about how you look? Pull out your journal and note the negative beliefs you have about your body and then next to each belief write yourself a new loving belief. When the old one pops up in your mind, catch it in its tracks and insert your new belief. Stop trying to hate yourself thin and start loving yourself healthy!

5. *Ditch the Diet and Go 80/20.*

Ugh! Diet. Remove this word from your vocabulary now! Liberate yourself from this flawed way of being healthy and open yourself up to freedom around food, never feeling ashamed for what you've eaten, and creating a lifestyle that allows you to look amazing and still enjoy things you love! Welcome to the world of 80/20!

With so many diet books out there promising rapid weight loss in little to no time at all, you might be saying to yourself, this girl is crazy! But hear me out. Diets are all about restriction and denial of certain foods, which ultimately leads to irrational desires and cravings for these exact things. Plus, we don't really learn anything from a diet other than how to lose weight. We don't learn how to keep that weight off when we reach our goal and start to add back in some of those forbidden foods.

The 80/20 approach is about learning how to create a healthy lifestyle and developing a long-term healthy relationship with food that allows you to have your cake and eat it too while still getting to look and feel your best. We eat well 80% of the time and then have 20% to indulge. Sounds awesome, right? Yes, it is!

Here's how you can start to create an 80/20 lifestyle for yourself:

1. Discover your current balance

Get clear on your current eating balance. How much healthy food do you consume in comparison to unhealthy? 20/80? 50/50? No judgment here, just get clear.

2. Start to be a conscious eater

Get rid of that dieter mentality by doing away with the phrase "I can't eat..." Instead, become a conscious eater. Identify what foods are part of your unhealthy ratio and then become conscious of how often you are eating them. This alone can create a big shift in the choices we make.

3. Take action

You've figured out your ratio, you've identified the foods that make up the imbalance and now it's time to take action. Start small and choose one meal a day that you could try to make healthier so that you can slowly work your way up to 80/20.

Take it even further: To learn more about how to create your individual 80/20 lifestyle plan, sign up for a free 30-minute coaching session and I will walk you through all you need to know.

And there you have my 5 Radical Steps to Your Healthiest Summer Body. There is one last essential step in making this happen for you. And that is, taking action!

Which step calls to you the most?

Where do you need to take immediate action in your life to start seeing the results you want?

How do you want to feel this summer and what needs to change?

Choose one step from the above and then decide what the first small action is that you need to take to make this your healthiest summer yet!

You've got this!

Wishing you a fun, healthy and amazing summer!

Much love.
Kate xx



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