



# SMOOTHIE MAKING 101



## Chapter 1: How Smoothies Can Transform Your health

Imagine if you could wake up every morning feeling amazing. Instead of waking up with a headache, or struggling to open your eyes because you're still so tired; you just leap out of bed full of life and ready to go and take on the day.

This energy is then enough to carry you through workouts, through your office job and through the evenings when you still have enough left in the tank to chat to play with your family. You have enough to work on projects, to keep the house clean and tidy and to make the very most of every last hour.

And imagine if you had the dream physique you've always wanted: flat abs, ripped muscle and skin that looks glowing and healthy.

Of course, there's no quick fix that can make all of this a reality, but it is a very good aim to have. And actually, there are just a few simple things you can do that will immediately take you a lot *closer* to that reality.

One of them is just to start drinking a smoothie every day.

Really? A smoothie? A drink that can improve your health, your mood, your appearance and your energy levels?

Definitely – and much more as well! In this book you'll learn how smoothies can *change your life* and you'll discover easy recipes for smoothies that boost immunity, fight stress, improve athletic performance, build muscle, fight cancer and MUCH more.

Let's take a look at just how it happens...

## Why We Need Nutrients

A smoothie is of course a blend of different fruits and vegetables. You simply take a bunch of fruits, drop them into a blender and hit 'go' so that your drink will be ready to consume. It's a simple process but it's enough to give you a drink that not only tastes amazing but also provides you with a ton of nutrition.

And this is the key word: nutrition.

What is incredibly important for all of us, is that we eat a nutrient dense diet. That is to say that it isn't good enough that we view our diet just as a source of fuel – it also must be a source of raw materials that provide us with enhanced performance and health.

The old saying that you 'are what you eat' is *literally* true. Your muscles, your bones, your hormones, your brain cells, your immune system and your digestive enzymes are all made from nutrients in your food and that's what makes it so important. When you consume fruits, meats or vegetables, your body will proceed to break them down and then use the constituent parts to perform numerous jobs throughout your system. These help you to grow, to develop, to fight illness and to function optimally.

And it's no coincidence that we need fruits, vegetables and other ingredients to thrive. After all, these are the things we evolved eating. It's not that our biology forced us to seek out these foods – the foods were available and so our biology adapted to survive on them.

We need these ingredients to thrive then and without them, we start to literally fall apart. We start to see signs of poor health such as difficulty sleeping, brittle hair and nails, weaker bones and lack of muscle tone. Our eyes aren't quite as white and we lose the spring in our step. Our hormones fall out of whack and we eventually start to see serious illnesses and other conditions slowly arise.

And this isn't the exception. This isn't a rare and unfortunate scenario that only some people experience... this is the *norm*.

Did you know that a huge number of the diseases and illnesses that affect us in old age are actually highly avoidable degenerative diseases? Your body was built to last your entire life. In theory, you

should be able to stay healthy, active and engaged right up until you keel over. But malnutrition allows all sorts of problems to slowly creep up on us from weak bones, to heart disease, to high blood pressure, to arthritis, to dementia.

Not all of these conditions are avoidable but in many cases, they are.

So what's the problem with our modern diet?

### The Problem With Modern Diets

The biggest issue is that we eat far too much processed food. What is processed food? Simply put, it's food that has been manufactured and prepared in such a way that it bears little resemblance to the original ingredients.

A good example might be a sausage role. Here, you think that you are getting some meat and pastry. The pastry is made from flower and egg but at least the sausage is real meat, filled with real amino acids and minerals, right?

Wrong! That meat is most likely a combination of all the cast offs from countless other meals that have been blended together and mushed into a pulp. That means you're getting the gristle and the parts of the meat that no one would eat in any other format.

From there, the sausage meat then has copious amounts of sugar, salt and fat added. This helps to preserve the sausage and make sure it still looks that appetising grey color when you come to eat it.

What about the fruits and vegetables you get in your cereal and your breakfast bars?

Nope, they're just as bad! These fruits have been 'freeze dried'. That means that they have been subjected to a vacuum and sub-zero temperatures. The low temperature will have frozen the moisture to the point that it becomes tiny icicles and the low pressure will then have forcibly removed them from the fruit. You think that won't bring with it some of the all important nutrients along the way?

Apart from anything else, when you consume something containing vitamin C, you *need* the moisture in order to absorb it. Vitamin C is literally a 'water soluble vitamin' and you can't use it if it's not presented correctly. And once again, lots of sugar and other additives will be added which will make your fruit look colorful and remain edible.

Something like crisps or chocolate bars meanwhile barely have any nutrients in them to begin with!

## How Empty Calories Are Destroying Your Health

All this means that you are consuming *empty calories*. An empty calorie is food like sausage roles, like unhealthy breakfast cereals and like ready meals that contain lots of calories but very little actual nutrition. You're temporarily filling yourself up and spiking your blood sugar but you're not providing any actual sustenance.

Plus, these empty calories take the form of simple carbs. Because there's nothing 'real' left in them, you'll digest them too quickly resulting in a spike in blood sugar. This provides a short energy burst but that then runs out just as quickly, leaving you craving real food.

Moreover, you'll be malnourished and fail to get the vitamins and minerals you need. And what's more, is that this will eventually translate to the build-up of more serious diseases and conditions.

Failing to get proper food in your diet is also what causes snacking behavior and weight gain. This is partly due to the fact that your blood sugar troughs so soon after it spikes and partly due to the fact that your body will 'crave' the things it needs. If you're not getting enough vitamin C, then your body will tell you it wants something sweet. It's trying to communicate that you need an orange or an apple – but years of training mean that you'll interpret this as needing a chocolate bar!

And even before that happens, you'll find you gain weight easily and you have to drag yourself through the day like some kind of zombie!

When you view food just as fuel and forget that it is also *sustenance*, that is when your body starts to fail you.

## Why Smoothies Are the Solution

So why are smoothies the answer?

The answer is simple: fruits and vegetables are *particularly* high in many of the micronutrients that we really need. They also provide them in a manner that is highly convenient and that is easy for the body to absorb. And thus, when we drink smoothies, we provide a 'hit' of great stuff that will help to power us through the day.

There are alternative options of course. One is just to try and get more home-prepared fruit and veg in your diet. This will definitely help to supply all the same nutrients but let's be honest – it's also a *lot* of hard work and something many of us will fail at.

Be honest with yourself. Will you *really* commit to cooking dinner from scratch every night? Are you really likely to stick to your five fruit a day as well?

Note as well that the whole ‘five fruit and veg daily’ guideline is *highly* arbitrary. The reality is that we need more nutrients than five fruit and vegetables will really supply us with. It’s also important to note that it’s more about *what* we’re eating than how much. Eating a kiwi fruit, avocado, mango, blueberries and banana will have a far different impact than eating 5 apples – or any other collection of fruits and vegetables.

And don’t even get me started on sauces and ready meals that claim they offer ‘one of your five a day’. Apart from the fact that they don’t offer any of the same fiber that you’d get from real fruit, there is barely a more meaningless phrase in existence!

Smoothies offer a convenient way to make sure you’re getting a BIG helping of vitamins and minerals that are ready to go and that makes them an excellent solution that can combat many of the ill-effects of a modern diet. Smoothies also let you get much more creative and not spend hours peeling or cutting up your fruits.

The other alternative solution that may already have crossed your mind, is to supplement in order to get your requirement of vitamins and minerals. While this is a good option, it’s important to recognize that supplementing is never *as* effective as getting the same minerals and nutrients naturally. Once again, this comes down to our evolution and the way our bodies are *designed* to get sustenance.

Some vitamins for example are best absorbed with fats, whereas others are better absorbed with water. Some get absorbed right away, whereas others take longer to digest. Some vitamins and minerals work best when taken at the same time.

All these are things that many supplements don’t take fully into account and the result is that a lot of the goodness ends up getting flushed down the toilet. With fruits and vegetables though, the vitamins and minerals are readily available in a ‘bioavailable form’ that the body is much better at using.

### What You Can Expect When You Start Drinking Smoothies

So what should you expect when you start drinking smoothies regularly?

As I suggested at the start of this chapter, you should expect to see your energy change in a BIG way. All the most energetic people I know – all the people who are most driven and focussed when it comes to working toward goals and getting what they want – are people who have regular smoothies.

You can also expect to feel better in a ton of other ways. You'll find that your skin, hair and nails look better, you'll find that your eyes are whiter and people will comment that you have a 'healthy glow'. You'll *feel* healthier too. You'll sleep better, you'll find you get ill much less often and you'll find you need to snack less throughout the day.

You'll lose weight too, thanks partly to the smaller intake of food (a nice side effect of reduced cravings and hunger) and partly to the increased metabolic rate of your body that will help you to burn through fat.

Best of all, you'll be reinforcing your body and improving your long term health so that you are less likely to develop cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease or countless other conditions.

And this shouldn't come as a surprise. This is no alien supplement that is supercharging your body.

This is how you are MEANT to feel.

This is how we felt ALL THE TIME.

Before we forget that we were meant to eat real food...





## Chapter 2: Before We Begin – The Downsides and Dangers of Smoothies

Before we dive right in though, you need to be aware that there are some downsides and risks involved with smoothies too.

Smoothies can do a world of good and throughout the rest of this book you'll be learning the ingredients, the techniques and tricks to enjoying some seriously healthy and tasty juices.

But unfortunately, as with any health trend, there are also those on the web who are pushing false information and generally causing harm to the good name of smoothies!

The first thing to be aware of is the idea of 'juice fasting'. Here, people will use smoothies as meal replacements and will *only* survive on juice for a period of days or weeks. The claim is that this is a great way to 'detox' the body and to remove 'toxins' and other things, as well as being a good way to jump-start your fat loss. This is not a good idea.

As far as detoxing goes, what's important to keep in mind is that this is another arbitrary term that doesn't really have any meaning. There is no scientific proof that we need to detox in any way or that we have a 'build up' of toxins.

The truth is that our body has its own system of detoxification and this works just fine without our help. Your body will have no difficulty in removing toxins over time and they are not likely to build up or increase in number in any way.

In one study, researchers asked the makers of ‘detoxing hair products’ to name some of the toxins that their shampoos and conditions could combat – they found that the manufacturers could give no good explanation.

We like the notion of detoxing because it seems to make intuitive sense but the reality is that this is actually just a waste of time.

And what you *also* need to be aware of, is the high sugar content found in smoothies. Now, sugar is not always a bad thing and over the course of this book, you will learn to mitigate the sugar found in your smoothies.

However, when you remove the food from your diet, you remove the buffer to protect you from the sugar and the acidity of your smoothies. This can then result in some serious damage to health and a diet consisting purely of smoothies is likely to damage the stomach lining and more importantly: the teeth.

I actually know someone who tried a ‘smoothie fast’ (despite my protestations) and they ended up eroding all of the enamel from their teeth. They had to go to the doctor and lost two teeth after just one week. So think long and hard before you jump on board any juice fasts or other trends.

The last thing to think about is whether or not a diet is sustainable. If you are going to ‘kick start’ a diet by using an extreme fast, then you’ll be putting your body through hell only to return to a normal type of eating. That means your weight will simply return to what it was before the fast and you won’t have benefited. Moreover, when you fast for this long, you actually increase your likelihood of storing fat.

Numerous processes in the body ensure this but one key example is that your body will produce a lot of cortisol as a response to low blood sugar. This cortisol then encourages lipogenesis – the creation of new fat stores. Oh and it also destroys muscle (via the release of myostatin) which makes you less metabolically active. It depletes testosterone significantly too, which further slows down your metabolism.

But you’re getting sugar right? From all that fruit? Yes - but only *simple sugar*. Fruits absorb *very* quickly into the blood stream and that means that you’re going to be getting three massive spikes of energy

throughout the day and nothing more. This is *not* good for your insulin sensitivity and it means you are highly likely to store all that sugar as fat.

So in short: avoid juice fasts and smoothie ‘cleanses’. Instead, focus on *adding* smoothies to your diet!

### How to Avoid Harming Yourself With the Sugar in Smoothies

Smoothies do a ton of good but as we’ve learned, they can also carry a few risks with them. If you’re now concerned at the potential damage that the sugar in smoothies can do, it might have put you off of the idea of adding smoothies to your diet.

But don’t worry – when you add just one smoothie of a reasonable size to your morning routine, you have nothing to worry about. This is *especially* true if you also make sure that you reduce sugar from other sources in your diet.

If you have particularly sensitive teeth though, or if you don’t react well to sugar, another option is to focus more on vegetable smoothies or to look for fruits that are lower in sugar. There are plenty of good options to choose from and adding more water to your smoothie can also help to dilute it. When we go through the recipes and tips, you’ll see that there are a number of different options that are lower in sugar than average.





## Chapter 3: How to Make the Perfect Smoothie

We don't have any smoothie recipes to start making yet but to start with, that isn't going to matter. Instead, we're going to look at the basics that apply to *any* smoothie.

Because really, you don't necessarily need a recipe. There's nothing wrong with just experimenting with different combinations of fruits and vegetables and tweaking the ratios to find things you like. Elsewhere in this book, you'll find a guide to the different health benefits of various fruits and vegetables, as well as the benefits of different nutrients – that can serve as a good starting point.

But to get creative, you need to know the basic rules that will apply regardless of your ingredients. How do you make sure that your smoothie is 'basically tasty' and doesn't leave you cold?

### The Basics

The first thing to do is to choose the fruits and vegetables that you're going to add to your smoothie. As mentioned, you should choose the fruits and vegetables based on the goals you want to achieve and the nutrients that you're interested in. Of course, you should aim for a balance but ask what your primary goal is too. Is this a fat burning smoothie? An energy smoothie? Or a fiber-packed smoothie?

Think too about the sugar content and the acidity. Something like a banana or an avocado will be much less sugary than something like an orange or a mango. If you have one or two ingredients that pack a lot of sugar, then consider adding a few less sweet ingredients to try and even the score.

What's also very important, is to make sure that you get your ratios correct and we'll come to this in a moment.

## Liquid

The first thing to add to your contain before you start making your smoothie is some form of liquid. This of course is going to be what keeps your drink a drink and not a mush! What's also important though, is that you think about how *much* liquid you want and what type of liquid you're going to use.

The most common choice of liquid will be water. However, it's also fairly common to use milk (which comes packed with its own nutrients) or to use fruit juices. It's also normal to use 1 to 2 cups for one person's worth of smoothie. Note though that your smoothie's consistency is very much dependent on what you do now. If you want the drink to be very runny, then adding a *lot* of water and juice is fine. If you prefer a thicker consistency though, then you'll want to add a little less and/or choose something that is thicker to begin with such as milk or even yogurt. Whether you prefer your drink to be runny or thick is entirely a matter of preference and might also vary depending on the recipe and the goal!

Common liquids you can use for delicious smoothies include:

- Water
- Almond milk
- Milk
- Coconut milk
- Coconut water
- Organic fruit juice
- Freshly squeezed juice
- Kefir
- Tea
- Yogurt

Have fun and experiment!

## Base

The next thing to think about is your base texture (often just referred to as the base). This is what is going to provide the body of your smoothie and give it that thick consistency so that it is a *smoothie* and not a juice.

The aim here is to pick something that has a thicker consistency itself then and that means something along the lines of bananas, mangos, pears, peaches or avocados. Yogurt also works well, as do nut butters (like peanut butter), coconut meat, chia seeds, ice, frozen fruit or even ice cream (though this last option is not so healthy!).

Good bases include:

- Bananas
- Mangos
- Pears
- Peanut butter
- Avocado
- Yogurt
- Frozen fruit
- Peaches
- Apples
- Plums
- Melon

## The Ratios

The next thing to do is to insert the additional fruits and/or vegetables in the necessary ratios. You've already set them aside, now you need to choose the specific quantities and add them in.

For instance, if you're going to make a green smoothie, then you'll probably be adding spinach, kale, beet greens, dandelions, lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower etc. For juicy ones, you'll likely have things like berries, oranges, apples etc.

You already have your base and this is going to give the most flavour to begin with. Choosing fruits from here then is a matter of choosing what goes well with that base and you can work this out by thinking about what works well on a plate together! For example, a great dessert is to have berries with yoghurt

and for that reason, you can get the same delicious effect by adding berries to a yogurt base. This will give you a ton of antioxidants, while the yogurt in particular will help you to get digestive benefits (we'll talk more about this in a subsequent chapter).

Conversely, strawberries are known to go *very* well with banana. Likewise, mango and orange is a great mix!

### And Blend!

With all that done, add your fruits into the blender (de-seeded and stones) and then blend them up into a pulp. You can always add more water at this point if you decide it needs it. Remember to keep your hand over the lid!

### Tips for Getting More From Your Smoothies

These instructions will help you to start experimenting with your own smoothies and feeling the health benefits of getting more vitamins and minerals for yourself.

But there are also a number of other things you can do to make your meals that much tastier, to make them more fun or to save yourself time.

Here are some tips:

#### **Add Garnishes**

There are numerous garnishes you can add to a smoothie if you want to give them a more impressive look and flavor. For example, you can sprinkle some granola or chopped nuts on top and this will help to fill you up. Nuts are also a great choice if you are going to be using peanut butter as a base!

#### **Sweeteners**

If you feel like your smoothie isn't sweet enough, then you might be tempted to add some sugar or a sweetener/syrup. This isn't a particularly good idea. Adding sugar to your smoothie is of course only going to exacerbate the issues already associated with the high sugar content in these drinks. Meanwhile, sweeteners actually 'fool' the body into thinking it has consumed sugar and trigger an insulin response – which in turn causes us to feel tired and may be bad for our health. There are some options that people prefer (such as stevia) but on the whole, it's better to stick with natural ingredients: just add more of the sweeter fruits and maybe consider using some honey. Honey actually has a ton of benefits and is great just before bed!



## CHAPTER 4 : FITTING SMOOTHIES INTO YOUR ROUTINE

### Chapter 4: Fitting Smoothies Into Your Routine

What's actually just as important as learning to make smoothies, is learning to fit them into your routine. Earlier, we discussed how you could fix your diet just by aiming to get more fruits and vegetables in it naturally. Of course this is a simple solution and is just as healthy as having fruits and vegetables.

The problem, as we saw, was that a lot of people struggle to fit that into their routine. They start out with good intentions but it only takes a long day at work for cooking a meal to be off the table (pun intended). Likewise, if you're on the train and all you can buy for lunch is a processed sandwich, that won't leave you with much choice but to break the healthy diet.

Smoothies are effective because they're easier to fit into a normal routine.

But they are not *perfectly* easy and from time to time, you'll find that they can still seem like too much work, too much mess and too much effort. This is particularly true considering that you don't just have to make the smoothie but also clean the smoothie maker, source the fruits and vegetables and generally put a lot of time and work into preparing them – and they're expensive!

Our objective here then, is to make sure we are set up to win. You need to make sure that it is easier to stick with your smoothie plan than it is to cheat on it and skip them. This chapter will help you to do exactly that!

## The Equipment

The first thing to do is to minimize the amount of work you have for yourself by using the right equipment. Front and center is that smoothie maker itself!

A good smoothie maker/blender/food processor/juicer, should be something that is highly powerful. You want to have the confidence of knowing that you can throw any combination of fruits and vegetables in there (within reason) and that it won't break or get stuck in the process. You want it to be fast and you want it to not make a mess.

What's also very important though, is that you minimize the amount of washing up you have to do for yourself.

The big problem here is that smoothie makers are often *very* inconvenient to wash and clean. This is true in particular thanks to their blades, which are awkward to reach and which rotate when you try and grip them. These factors combine to make cleaning out your blenders a royal nightmare.

Fortunately, some newer models have been designed with this in mind and feature blades that are easy to remove or that don't come into direct contact with the pulp and thus stay cleaner.

Another handy feature is the ability to remove the top of your blender and go. The first product to get famous for doing this was the NutriBullet but its popularity has spawned countless copycats. The idea is simply that you have a blender and a water bottle combined in a single product, meaning that you don't have a separate glass to wash up!

## Prep and Pick-Up

Prep and Pick-Up is a concept that comes from author Tim Ferriss. The idea is that you want to do all of your work *in advance*, so that all you have to do when it comes to the crunch is pick it up and go.

In our case, that means that you're going to prepare your smoothie at the start of the week and then drink it throughout the week. One way to do this is just to make huge quantities of your smoothies on the Sunday and then to store them in bottles in the fridge. Each morning, you can simply grab a bottle and go, without having to actually labor over it then and there!

Some people also find it helpful to freeze the fruits themselves before dropping them into the blender. This is a great choice because it allows them to buy in bulk up front and then not worry about ripening. Keep in mind though, that ripe fruit is less of an issue when it's being blended anyway!

You can also make your life a little easier by ordering your fruits and vegetables online. This is a great choice if you find you are struggling to get time to head out and get your ingredients as it means they will all be ready for you and you can simply drop them in the blender ready to go. You can also make savings this way!

**Note:** If you're interested in making savings on your fruits and vegetables, then the very best way to buy is from a market. If you happen to have one near you, then make sure you take full advantage of that fact!

### Easy Smoothies

You can also make your smoothies a little easier in numerous other ways. Using a pure fruit juice for instance can save you time and effort and so too can using purees and canned fruits. These are especially useful for things like pineapples, peaches and cranberries. Why? Because those ingredients are particularly difficult to prepare and involve a lot of peeling and deseeding. By using a tinned fruit, you have it ready to go in a form that is soft and easy to blend!

### Bought Smoothie

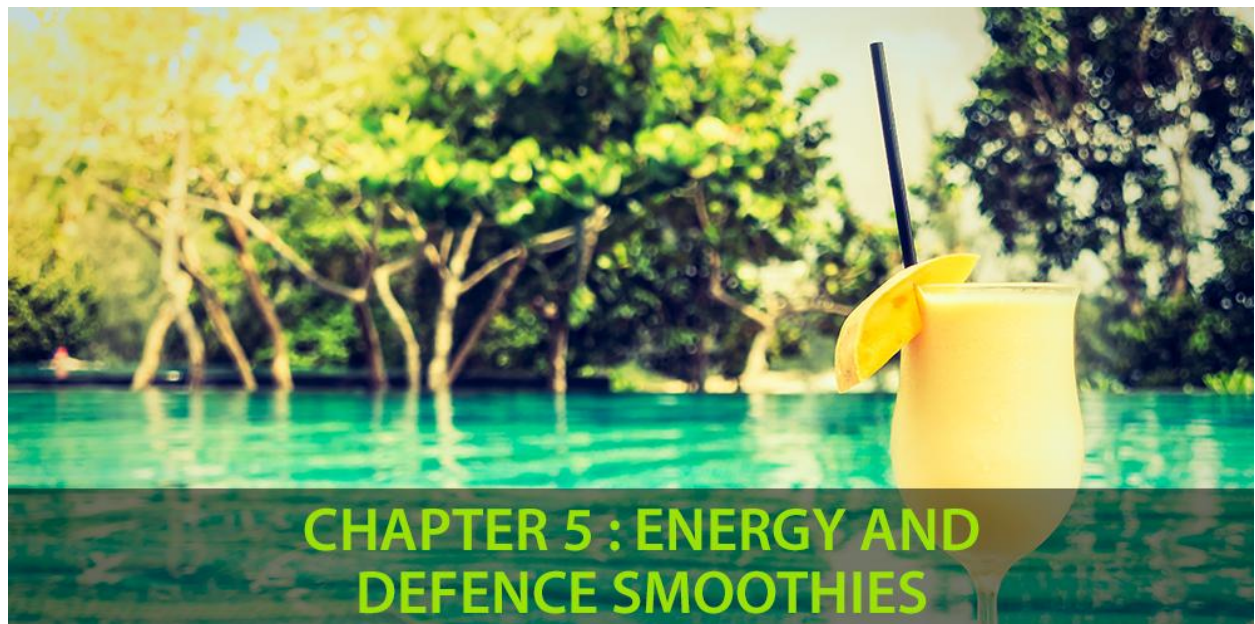
If you really don't have time to make your own smoothies, then should you be tempted by store-bought smoothies? Is this a good way to get your ingredients without spending time?

The answer is yes and no...

Of course making your own smoothie gives you tighter control over the ingredients, it saves you a lot of money and all in all, it is a smarter choice. While buying a store-bought smoothie might not sound like a lot of money (perhaps setting you back \$2.50 a day) it will quickly add up and that is actually \$17.50 a week, \$70 a month and around \$840 a year!

But then again, if you normally get a coffee every morning, then you can swap it for a smoothie and spend just as much while getting health benefits instead of fuelling yourself with that wired feeling that you get from coffee!

If buying smoothies in town is the only way you can stick with it, then it's money well-spent. But do be very careful to check the ingredients *thoroughly*. Just because the ingredients brag about how many whole, fresh fruits they put in, that doesn't mean that they haven't *also* flooded it with sugar, additives and other things. Do your research!



## Chapter 5: Energy and Defence Smoothies

Okay, so you know why smoothies are so good for you, you know how to make them and you know how to avoid the common pitfalls...

So I guess it's time that we started looking at some actual recipes to help fortify your health and transform your energy and looks.

We're going to start out with an 'energy and defence' approach. The smoothies we're looking at in this chapter are all about providing you with lots of energy and at the same time, strengthening your immune system to provide you with better protection against illness and disease.

This is your basic smoothie and it's the kind of purpose that most people associate with smoothies to begin with.

So what should you put into a smoothie designed for energy and defence? Here is one suggestion:

### Morning Wakeup Smoothie

First up, the recipe. Then we'll dive into why it works:

- ½ a cup of cold water
- 1 Beet
- Lemon juice to taste
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 tablespoons of coconut oil
- 2 cups of mixed frozen berries

If you're used to having coffee first thing in the morning, then you might find that you rely on using *something* as a pick-me-up. The problem though is that coffee a) doesn't have all that much nutritional value and that it is addictive. Caffeine works by blocking the receptors in the brain that respond to adenosine – which is an inhibitory neurotransmitter that we produce as a by-product of the energy process. The more time we spend working, the more adenosine builds up and the slower and less cognitively able we become. By blocking these receptors, caffeine can prevent adenosine from having any impact and this in turn means that the brain feels more awake.

The problem is that the brain responds to this. How? By creating *more* adenosine receptors! The result is that you now need even more caffeine to feel its effects. Worse, is that when you *aren't* consuming any caffeine you will feel slow, lethargic and prone to headaches! When you are asleep, you of course aren't getting any caffeine and some people now believe that the morning grogginess we all experience (sleep inertia) is actually often *caused* by caffeine withdrawal!

Then there's the fact that caffeine stimulates the release of stress hormones like cortisol and norepinephrine. It would be a fairly accurate description to say that caffeine is like 'stress in a cup'. As you can probably work out by now then, coffee isn't a healthy choice for a morning boost!

This smoothie on the other hand is and it has a ton of different ingredients that do a world of good to wake you up in the morning, provide you with energy throughout the day and to protect you from harm.

Let's examine each ingredient:

## **Berries**

A mixture of berries is a fantastic way to improve your immune system and to protect yourself against a number of health problems – cancer in particular. That’s because berries are absolutely packed with antioxidants. Antioxidants are substances that combat the action of ‘free radicals’ in the body. Free radicals meanwhile are compounds that damage cells when they come into contact with them. These can cause visible signs of ageing as the damage becomes visible in our skin and in our hair. But more concerning is what happens when those free radicals break through our cell walls and all the way to our nuclei – the centers of the cells that contain our DNA. When this happens, they can damage those strands of DNA enough to cause small mutations. And if those mutations are copied, this is how we get cancerous growths.

In short, a diet high in antioxidants is one of the very best things you can look for to improve your health. Adding berries to a smoothie is one of THE best ways to accomplish this by far.

## **Beet Juice**

What you’re *really* going to feel when you drink this smoothie though, is the power of the beet juice. Did you know that beet juice is actually such a potent performance enhancer that it is used by a number of different athletes?

That’s because beet juice acts as a ‘vasodilator’. A vasodilator is something that widens the blood vessels (veins and arteries) and thereby helps more blood and oxygen to travel around the body. This means more blood and oxygen to your brain, which in turn translates to better concentration, mental energy and cognitive performance. It also means you’re likely to enjoy better energy *in general* and you may experience considerable performance improvements if you head out for a long run!

## **Honey**

Honey is a great choice for energy because it provides its sugar in a number of different ways. Specifically, honey contains both fructose *and* sucrose which are absorbed into the bloodstream at different rates. This means that honey can give you a little sugar hit right at the start of the day but will also serve as a slower supply to keep you going until lunch. This can help prevent snacking. Of course honey also lends our smoothie a bit of sweetness!

## **Coconut Oil**

Coconut oil is another very powerful inclusion in this smoothie – everything is there for a reason!

Coconut oil is a good choice because it contains a very specific type of fat: medium chain triglycerides. This fat is absorbed differently from other types of fat in the body and will head straight for your liver, where it will stimulate the production of ketones.

Ketones are interesting to us because they serve as a ‘secondary’ form of energy for the body. When the body doesn’t have glucose, it relies on ketones instead. Thus, your body can survive on ketones and actually the brain *prefers* ketones for certain tasks.

Any mixture with coconut oil is going to give you a big boost and will help you to feel more alert and alive!

### **Lemon**

Finally, we have lemon juice which is a great source of numerous vitamins and minerals, as well as several other things. In this particular smoothie, the role of the lemon juice is to provide vitamin C and B6, as well as to give us that refreshing wakeup call that you can only get from citrus!

### [Stress Buster Smoothie](#)

Not a fan of that last smoothie? The next one will help to support your immune system and fight stress but without quite so much fuel in terms of ketones or vasodilation.

Again, let’s do the ingredients first:

- 2 bananas
- 1 cup organ juice
- 1 peeled orange
- ¾ cup of almond milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 carrot peeled
- Ice

This is another great one for combating morning fatigue and giving you some get-up and go. The bananas are a great source of energy and also of potassium, which will help to fuel you for a lot longer than just those morning hours!

The carrot is key because it contains good quantities of B6 (as does the banana) and this helps the body to process energy from food. This means that you'll get more use out of the carbs that you consume and out of the very sugar in this smoothie! Better yet, recent research suggests that lutein (which is found in carrots) might be effective at improving the energy efficiency of our mitochondria. Mitochondria are the small 'energy factories' in our cells that have the job of turning glucose and other forms of energy into ATP, then using that ATP to drive the movement of muscles and fuel our cells. In one study, it was found that when mice were given lutein, they would run further on their wheel and actually burn a lot more calories – with no prompt from the researchers!

Lutein requires a source of fat because it is fat soluble. The good news is that the almond milk in this very smoothie will do that job just nicely.

Vanilla extract meanwhile is another potent antioxidant, as well as providing anti-inflammatory properties and combating cholesterol it's a very good tool for making our smoothie a little sweeter on the way down.

Finally, we have the orange which is really the 'stress busting' part of the equation. There's a lot of orange in here and that's going to provide a lot of vitamin C. Vitamin C plays a vital role because it is what the brain uses to make serotonin. Serotonin meanwhile is the 'happiness hormone' and our very own 'natural' anti-anxiety medication.

By keeping your blood sugar steady and providing serotonin, this drink can set you up in a good mood and provide the perfect start to the day!

### Brain Fuel Smoothie

Got a challenging day up ahead? This 'brain fuel' smoothie should provide your grey matter with everything it needs to ace any challenge that comes your way!

- Protein powder
- ½ banana
- 1-2 tsp coconut oil
- 1t cinnamon
- 1-2tsp yerba mate green tea

This combination is a powerful smoothie for anyone looking to boost their concentration and focus. The first thing of interest in here is the protein powder. Protein is brain food because it is where we get our

amino acids – with amino acids being key players in the creation of *numerous* neurotransmitters. In short, our brain needs protein to function properly and protein powder (whey protein) is a great place to get it.

Next up, we have banana and coconut oil, which we have already seen the benefits of. Coconut oil in particular is crucial for brain power and it's actually the key ingredient in a lot of products designed to enhance brain performance – like 'Bullet Proof Coffee' and like 'Brain Octane' oil.

Cinnamon meanwhile is a very healthy way to add more flavor to our drink. It not only lowers blood sugar but also helps to reduce the likelihood of heart disease. In fact, the ability of cinnamon to reduce blood sugar is so potent, that it is often recommended for diabetic patients. This makes it perfect for us to once again avoid those spikes and drops in blood sugar that can ruin our performance otherwise. Cinnamon also packs a lot of antioxidants to help support the brain for the long term.

The final ingredient here though is the yerba mate green tea. Green tea is a fantastic option for anyone looking to enhance their brain power and is a better choice than coffee. For starters, the caffeine content is considerably lower in green tea, which means you can get the slight boost without worrying as much about stress, jitters and addiction.

Moreover, green tea contains the ideal combination of caffeine and fellow xanthine 'l-theanine'. L-theanine has an effect on the brain that is somewhat the 'opposite' of caffeine in that it is gently inhibitory. Many people find that when they combine caffeine with l-theanine, the two complement each other perfectly. The caffeine helps to wake people up and make them more alert and focussed, while the theanine helps keep them calm and prevents stress levels reaching an all time high!

Green tea is also once again *very* high in antioxidants too. Any green tea will do the job nicely but we chose yerba mate because it has perhaps the perfect balance of all the key ingredients. In fact, Darwin himself is reported to have described green tea as 'the most perfect stimulant'. Can't argue with that! This should also serve to be neuroprotective and reduce the likelihood of Alzheimer's, dementia or other forms of cognitive decline.

### Breakfast Smoothie

Finally, let's take a look at a breakfast smoothie that has one job – to fill you up and keep you going until lunch for those big days!

- ½ avocado

- 150g strawberry
- 4 tbsp low-fat natural yogurt
- 200ml semi-skimmed milk
- Lemon or lime
- Honey

This is a smoothie designed to see you through the day until lunch, which will help boost your performance and prevent cravings. The best part of this smoothie is the avocado, which delivers a delicious base but which also helps to release energy very slowly throughout the day thanks to its status as a healthy saturated fat.

It was once thought that saturated fats would cause weight gain and heart problems. More recently though, studies have shown us that this is not in fact the case. While saturated fats do contain more calories, they are also actually better for us thanks to their slow release of energy, which makes them very effective in providing us with a steady supply of energy and avoiding sugar spikes in the blood.

We've also seen that honey has a similar effect when it comes to releasing energy slowly. And that low-fat yogurt can help to get your gut bacteria in check, which is very important for digestion. This is something we'll be looking at in more detail in the next chapters.

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Hopefully, this has given you a few ideas for great morning smoothies you can use to start your day right. And by sharing the reasoning behind each one and the reason they are so potent, you will hopefully now have a better idea of how to bring about similar effects while still experimenting with the ingredients as you see fit!

More importantly, I hope that this chapter has now opened your eyes to the *real* power of smoothies. We're talking game-changing improvements in performance and health here. These smoothies don't just give you a bit of energy and nutrition – when you stick with them they'll help to protect your brain as it ages, protect your cells from cancer and more.

And we're just getting started!



## Chapter 6: Sleep Aid, Digestive and Hangover Smoothies

You've seen a bunch of smoothies that you can rely on as your morning pick-me-up and any of these will help you to improve your general health while also starting to feel much more energetic not just in the mornings but throughout the entire day.

Remember: one smoothie will make you feel better for a few hours. But it's by drinking smoothies regularly that you start to see the benefits build up over time and really change your life. You need to stick with it!

That said, you might find you want to experiment with some different ingredients to see if you can enjoy some of the many other possible benefits of smoothies. This chapter then is going to look at some more general positive health effects of drinking smoothies. In particular, we'll discover how you can boost your sleep, aid your digestion and even combat a hangover!

### The Bed Time Smoothie

This bed time smoothie will help you to not only sleep more deeply and get better restoration but will also help you to be more anabolic through the night so that you build more muscle!

- 2 cups whole milk

- ½ a banana
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- Cherries
- Kiwi
- 1 tablespoon honey

There's a whole lot of good stuff in this smoothie that will help you to sleep more deeply and wake up feeling more energized. For bodybuilders and athletes, this smoothie will also help to put you in a more anabolic state, meaning that you'll produce more testosterone through the night and wake up with enhanced energy.

So how does it all work?

First up the whole milk. Whole milk is an ideal choice for drinking before bed and *especially* for men. That's because whole milk can drastically increase testosterone production and the majority of our testosterone production occurs during sleep. Specifically, we produce the most testosterone at 4am! Why is whole milk so important for testosterone? Simple: testosterone is *made* from healthy saturated fats. And whole milk contains lots of saturated fat. Women meanwhile can just enjoy the soothing benefits of milk which should help put them in the mood for sleep!

The peanut butter is in here partly because it will provide a source of protein as well while you're sleeping, so your body can put that testosterone to good use and build muscle!

Next up comes that tablespoon of honey, which is once again perfect for supply energy both slowly and quickly. This actually has a particular benefit while you sleep though because you need energy while you sleep in order to enjoy the greatest restoration. One reason a lot of us wake up feeling groggy and unwell (other than the aforementioned caffeine withdrawal), is that we have such low blood sugar. If you recall how rough you feel when you haven't eaten anything for a while, imagine how your body must feel after not eating for 8 hours! Honey can solve this problem by ensuring you have a steady supply throughout the night and several health writers like Seth Rogen highly recommend it right before bed.

Cherries are the cherry on top. That's because – other than being great sources of vitamin C and excellent antioxidants – they also happen to provide us with a natural source of melatonin. And if melatonin is familiar, it's probably because you know it as the 'sleep hormone'. This is what the brain

produces to get us ready for bed and it can thus make us fall asleep faster and also enjoy a deeper rest when we eventually get there!

Why is kiwi in here? Well actually, it is carefully chosen for its synergistic effects with the peanut butter and banana. Across these three ingredients we have ample sources of zinc, magnesium and vitamin B6 – the very same ingredients that make up the popular supplement ZMA. ZMA is a supplement that is used by athletes to encourage deeper sleep and also to produce more testosterone. The magnesium and zinc will also likely have powerful beneficial effects on ‘brain plasticity’ – in other words, they will help your brain to rewire itself and form new connections, cementing everything that you learned during the day!

### Hangover Smoothie

The above smoothie will also work very nicely as a hangover cure, or you can simplify it and just use the most important ingredients:

- Peanut butter
- Banana
- Honey

In fact, I would recommend that you do this and also replace the milk with water. Milk is not terribly friendly after a hangover as it can curdle somewhat in the stomach and make you gag. Add a little salt and lemon too, to create this:

- Peanut butter
- Banana
- Honey
- Water
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of lemon

The other three ingredients though are *perfect* for making you feel much better after a big night out.

Firstly, the bananas will provide you with a natural alkaline. This will help to counteract the unwanted effects of the acidity in the stomach and provide a natural antacid. Good start. At the same time though, it will also help you to replenish your potassium. Increasing potassium is very important as you will have lost your electrolytes from drinking. This is partly what is causing your headaches and it’s also why you

experience cramping in the night. This is also why we've included a little salt so that you get the sodium and potassium balance back up to scratch – it's a little like drinking an isotonic sports drink!

Next up is the honey, which is incredible for hangovers. Yes, it will improve your blood sugar and give you back some much-needed energy. But at the same time, it will also provide you with a way to counteract acetaldehyde. Acetaldehyde is the main toxic substance that the body creates when it breaks down alcohol – this is precisely what is causing the majority of your symptoms and it needs to go. Guess what gets rid of acetaldehyde? Fructose!

The water meanwhile will rehydrate you, while the protein in the peanut butter will help you to replenish your neurotransmitters and also get rid of those munchies!

### How to Create a Smoothie to Improve Digestion

Why drink a smoothie to improve digestion? Of course this can be helpful if you have any digestion troubles that lead to acid reflux etc. but it's also just a good idea for your general health.

You know all those nutrients you're getting through your smoothies? As it happens, they're only going to be any use if you can actually digest them and put them into action. And unfortunately, a lot of us have poor digestion and struggle with this. That's particularly true if you are someone who experiences a lot of stress in their life. The reason that stress prevents digestion is because stress causes blood flow to be directed toward the functions that are considered critical for survival – for 'fight or flight'. These include the likes of the muscles, the brain and the senses – but not digestion or immune system.

What's more, is that we require a lot of particular elements in our diet in order to be able to digest food properly and many of us just aren't getting these crucial things. For example, certain fruits will contain enzymes that naturally help you to break down foods. One of the best known examples of this is pineapple, which contains bromelain (which is also very good for your teeth!).

At the same time, fermented foods, raw vegetables and things like yogurt are helpful to us because they contain live cultures of 'friendly bacteria'. They're referred to as friendly bacteria because they have positive roles in the body, including the ability to create a lot of important micronutrients *and* to help us create digestive enzymes.

If you suspect you need a little help with your digestion, the try making a smoothie that contains any of the following ingredients, all of which have very positive effects on digestion:

- Pear

- Pineapple
- Watermelon
- Melon
- Papaya
- Hami Melon
- Orange
- Tangerine
- Guava
- Mango
- Cauliflower
- Chinese Yam
- Tomato
- Spinach
- Cabbage
- Pumpkin
- Grape
- Sugarcane
- Grapefruit
- Catnip
- Probiotics like yogurt and fermented foods

This time, I will leave the precise mixture up to you! This is a great option though for creating a green smoothie that will also be low in sugar and provide you with lots of further nutrients.



## Chapter 7: Weight Loss, Muscle Building and Performance Smoothies

Smoothies can help with practically every aspect of your health and that includes boosting performance for gym rats and other people interested in building muscle or losing weight. If you want a smoothie that will take you beyond just being ‘healthy’, these are some of the best options for reaching your weight loss goals or muscle building...

### The Long Distance Smoothie

The long distance smoothie can help you to get more out of your runs and improve your performance in all kinds of aerobic exercise. The precise ingredients are:

- 1 cup of frozen blueberries
- 1 cup coconut water
- 2 tbs chia seeds
- 2 medium frozen bananas
- Pinch of salt
- 1 beat

This combination has a ton of different benefits that will help you to run further and faster and lose more weight as a result – some of which you’ll already be very familiar with. We’ve seen that beats help

to improve vasodilation for example to help you get more blood and oxygen around the body for weight loss. We've also seen that coconut oil (and thus water) can provide you with a whole lot of energy in the form of ketones. The decision to use a water rather than a milk is important to prevent bloating and to keep you feel light when you hit the tarmac. Just make sure that you give yourself plenty of time before you go for the run – ideally consume this around an hour before you head out.

Then there's the blueberries which will fuel you with vitamin C and the bananas which provide plenty of good, usable energy. You might also have guessed that the salt and the bananas are in there to replenish electrolytes as you run and to avoid cramping. All that remains is the chia – what's this all about?

Chia seeds are some amazing seeds that have the ability to hold several times their volume of water. You can then consume them and they will then slowly release all of that fluid inside the stomach. What makes this so amazing is that it allows you to have a steady supply of hydration as you run.

If you have ever heard of the 'Tarahumara Tribe' – a tribe of people who are known to run marathons on a highly regular basis – then it might interest you to know that chia seeds are thought to be one of the keys to their amazing abilities!

### Muscle Building Smoothie

- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 helping of chocolate protein shake
- ½ a banana
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- Cherries
- Kiwi
- 1 tablespoon honey

This is that same smoothie we had for sleep but with the addition of the protein shake. Again, you will likely want to choose whey protein, which will release readily into the bloodstream and which comes from milk and so is very healthy and natural.

Drink this smoothie straight after a workout and you'll replenish your muscles by providing the amino acids they need to repair microtears caused by training. What's more, is that the sugar in the smoothie will head straight to the muscles to restore glycogen – rather than being stored as fat.

Better yet, consume this smoothie just before bed and you'll have another anabolic window where you'll see enhanced muscle growth. In this case though, you may want to use a casein protein instead of whey. Casein releases protein much more slowly and this in turn means that it will provide a steady supply as you are sleeping.

### Fat Burning Smoothie

How can a smoothie filled with sugar possibly help you to *lose* weight? Read the ingredients and then we'll get down to the mechanics of how this one works...

The key ingredients are:

- 2 kiwi
- 1 green apple
- A handful of spinach
- 1 leaf kale
- 1 banana
- ½ cup of fresh apple juice
- Macha tea
- Pinch of ground cayenne pepper
- Lemon juice

Firstly, this is a vegetable smoothie that will provide you with much less sugar for each glass and thereby be less likely to lead to fat storage. This is one for those who are worried about their teeth too!

Meanwhile, the apple that is present will provide you with vitamin C. Vitamin C is important because – as we've seen – it can increase serotonin. What we didn't mention about serotonin though, is that it helps to suppress the appetite!

Meanwhile, the macha tea, ground cayenne pepper and lemon juice are all thermogenic to some extent. That means they actually raise your metabolism to help you burn more calories throughout the day.

If you can use this smoothie instead of having your regular breakfast, you should find it does a ton of good to help you burn through calories. This is especially true if you have it within 30 minutes of waking up – the spinach will supply you with a good amount of protein and studies show that consuming protein as soon as you wake up can lead to weight loss!

## Conclusions

Now you have not only a huge selection of delicious smoothies to choose from but also a full understanding of why they are so important for your health and how you can use them strategically to enhance your weight loss, immune strength and more!

Make sure that you don't consume more than one of these a day and that you use the tips provided to actually make them fit into your lifestyle. Think about what the results are that you want from your smoothie and design a few recipes that you can use to get all the different benefits you require. That might be better digestion, better sleep, muscle building, fat loss or all of the above!

And of course you should vary your smoothies and have different combinations to maximize the variety in your diet. That said, you should also make sure to keep coming back to the same smoothies and same ingredients to ensure that you get the long term benefits of building up lots of antioxidants and nutrients.

How about having a weight loss smoothie every other day and an energy/defence smoothie in-between?

You'll find that whatever your choice, you start to quickly feel more energetic and generally healthier. Your mood will improve, you will lose fat and you'll develop a healthy glow that you just can't get from supplements. Of course for best results, combine this with a healthy lifestyle and training regime!

But you won't believe just how transformative these effects are. You're going to have to actually give it a go for that...

## Happy Blending!

Warmly,  
Her Zen Academy