

How a Cactus Solved My Hydration Problems

And can solve yours too!

TAZREEN JAHAN BARI

If we are to keep up with recent health trends, achieve that near-mythical glass skin and not get a pounding headache by the end of the day – we must stay hydrated.

If you observe the health nerds and beauty gurus on social media, you will notice that hydration is the solution to all your problems. But here is the most tragic failure of my life – I cannot seem to stay hydrated. And I know I am not the only one. The apps, alarms, overpriced sippy cups, persistent friends who slide into your DMs only to remind you to drink water are all for nought. All it takes is a prickly blob with attitude issues to get your act together. It is hard to believe, I know. But you have not met Lemon yet.

Let me introduce you to Lemon, my pet cactus who single-handedly solved all my problems by teaching me how to stay hydrated. You never know what might end up inspiring you to make a spontaneous move that ends up changing your life. It can be anything from a lemon flavoured air freshener to lime green toothpaste. Now that I look back, I cannot quite remember which one of these mundane things made me think that to have a young adult life that is sufficiently charming, I must find myself a pet cactus named Lemon. And when my eyes landed on a lime green cactus last summer, I had no idea that this tiny blob of a being has the answer to my ever-lingering hydration issues.

After the initial excitement of having a new pet started to fade, I noticed with no small sense of annoyance that Lemon looked smug, almost gloating whenever I watered him. But this was only the beginning. Every time I failed to get my eight glasses per day, Lemon started mocking me, showing off his hydration capabilities. Because while drinking water once a week is enough for him, I have to guzzle down an entire tank full of water every day to get by. Even without the existence of a raised eyebrow on his blob of a head, the smugness in his attitude was all too visible.

Eventually, I decided to free myself from the scrutiny of a tiny cactus of all things by practising the art of hydration. Yes, I was indeed mocked into submission. But that is beside the point because this is when I finally realised Lemon's true intentions. He was challenging me to stay hydrated by taunting me! Because of Lemon, today I can proudly say that I am a woman free from the clutches of dehydration.

So, what are you waiting for? Get yourself a cactus and solve your drinking (not enough water) problem once and for all! Conquer your headaches and let that healthy glow of your skin burn the haters down. As a parting gift, here is a word of wisdom: do not let a prickly blob get the best of you.

Tazreen is trying to outwit her judgemental cactus, Lemon, in the game of hydration. Tell her she is delusional at tazreenzahan@gmail.com



Detox Drinks and All the Hype

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The basic concept of a detox and cleanse is the same: to rid the body of accumulated toxins and chemicals for better health overall. That seems safe enough, so why are people as suspicious of it as nosy neighbours are of your love life?

Our body is very complex and adept in understanding what's happening within. Marketed detox and cleansing products often may raise an alarm. Our organs and immune system are naturally capable of ridding our body of unwanted toxins. The barrier may be that our current lifestyle and food habits can cause certain bodily processes to slow down, or make these vital organs work harder than they need to.

THE FACTS

There is little scientific evidence to support claims that detox drinks can help remove toxins from the body. However, a detox drink may be a healthful snack if it contains plenty of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, healthful proteins, fats, and fibrous carbohydrates promotes the natural detoxification system in the body and creates overall balance.

Detox drinks may boost health, aid in weight loss, and support the body's natural detoxification processes, but this is different from medical detoxification.

Detoxification has significance in medical science and doctors will often recommend it to people who are coping with substance abuse. It refers to the medically supported management of a person experiencing acute intoxication.

An article in the *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* notes that some studies show that commercially available detox diets may improve the way a person's liver

removes toxins from their body. However, the article also highlights that these studies had flawed methodologies and small sample sizes. It also says that a detox diet may help a person lose weight, but only because the diet is low in calories.

THE HOW-TO

With all the festivals throughout the year, our appetite makes us indulge in guilty pleasures and eat plates full of unhealthy food. The aftermath is usually indigestion, acidity and what not.

The butter cookies, roast chicken, pudding, and extra helpings of your grandma's banana flambé are all threatening to make you gain a few pounds. A balanced detox diet is the answer to all these problems. If our binge lasts for seven days, so should our detox. We cannot expect to flush all the toxins out in a day. Another thing to keep in mind is that food alone can't do the trick. Adequate sleep and working out are as important as eating healthy.

An efficient detox is one that focuses on ailments to protect and supercharge organ health. This can involve cutting out or down on "toxins" like refined sugar, packaged foods, and copious amounts of caffeine that can derail our natural detoxing. Replacing those guilty pleasures with some temporary diet restrictions, a spoonful of herbal concoctions and green juices is the key!

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