

# THE DETOX MAINTENANCE MANUAL

Sara Gottfried MD



# Dr. Sara's Top 10 Strategies to Continue Detoxification, Maintain the Progress, and Close the Gap Between Intention and Behavior

I often get asked – at the end of a detox, or when someone I'm working with has made great strides with their health – how do you maintain the progress? As a woman who's helped thousands of women and men achieve small victories over time with food, emotional eating, creating room for exercise, parenting, and relationships, I want to share my favorite strategies for you to keep the faith and continue to make wise choices for yourself. Some of these you may have heard before, and I want to encourage you to read these tips with "Beginner's mind" – as if these are fresh and new, and you're hearing them for the first time.

I know that it's easy to fall into the trap of going back to bad habits – but we don't want that! Most of us struggle with the gap between intention and behavior, and I want to help you close the gap. Here are my top 10 tools you can use to keep nourishing yourself.



**1. Study the mirror.** This may sound vain, but it's actually totally sane: I want you to track a few signs of toxicity in the mirror.

- Look at the whites of your eyes. Are your eyes a little yellow, suggesting liver congestion? Is there redness in the sclera (white portion), suggesting lack of sleep? You want to jump in to address the subtle problems that arise before they snowball into bigger issues that are harder to address.
- Do you have bags or dark circles under your eyes? Rather than trying to find the answer in an expensive skin cream, recognize that the skin under your eyes is the thinnest part of the face, so it's a great window into fluid status and adrenal health. If last night was heavy on the truffle fries (or other sources of sodium), you may notice puffiness. Drink more filtered water. Dark circles tend to indicate adrenal issues, such as high cortisol or low DHEA.
- Is your skin elastic? Pinch the skin of your cheeks gently and watch the response. Is your skin taut? Elastic? If it's dry and tight, that suggests inflammation is brewing and needs to be addressed.

**2. Heal your gut.** If you've gone through Dr. Sara's Detox, you know how the gut is crucial to your continued success and protecting your progress. As Hippocrates famously said, all disease begins in the gut. One of the main reasons for cravings and fat loss resistance is leaky gut, food sensitivities, and/or altered intestinal bacteria (too many "fat" bugs and not enough "skinny" bugs). As you learn more about your own gut, you will soon learn that it's rarely just one component of the gut that's out of whack. Usually it's multiple problems such as malabsorption and increased gut permeability (leaky gut). I recommend that you keep up the 4Rs of gut healing: Remove, Replace, Reinoculate, and Repair. That means you want to be watching your belly for signs of problems: bloating, constipation, loose stool, discomfort.

- Need additional help? Get our [basic gut protocol](#) or [advanced gut protocol](#).
- You also want to be working with a practitioner who can support your next steps so that it doesn't feel Do-It-Yourself! Find a functional medicine clinician or work with one of [several hundred practitioners that have completed my special trainings](#).

**3. Keep tracking.** In the detox, I asked you to track 10 different measurements, including body fat, waist size, and blood sugar. To keep yourself accountable, I recommend that you continue tracking the most important measures at least once per week. If your fasting blood sugar is not in the optimal range of 70 to 86 or post-prandial is not less than 120, work with a health practitioner to improve it – and keep tracking it once per week.



**4. Detox | Retox | Detox.** When you begin to "retox" (i.e., retotify by eating foods that contain metabolic blockers like sugar or sugar substitutes, gluten, genetically modified organisms, conventional meat, alcohol, etc.), learn how to put on the brakes. Don't let the gap between intention and behavior swallow you whole. You've worked too hard to make the progress – claim your seat at the table of eating intelligence. One of my favorite new books on this topic, which teaches us how to apply the wisdom of emotional intelligence to eating is a new book by my friend and colleague, psychologist Susan Albers, Psy.D. It's called [Eat Q: Unlock the Weight-Loss Power of Emotional Intelligence](#).

**5. Keep your besties on speed dial.** The chief of psychiatry famously said that if you're a guy and you want to improve health, be with a woman. If you're a woman and you want to improve health, hang out with your girlfriends. Pick out your best deputies who hold you accountable for taking care of yourself and getting your weekly dose of laughter – and keep them on speed dial for those moments when you want to bark at your spouse or kids. It raises oxytocin to hang with your girlfriends, and it's the best way for women to reset their hormones – oxytocin lowers cortisol and resets estrogen and thyroid.

**6. Is mercury rising?** If you start to feel like crap, or gain weight, or wonder why life is feeling so hard... check your biology before deciding it's evidence of a moral failing. I commonly see women and men with fatigue, hair loss, weight gain, low sex drive and underperforming thyroids. I encourage them to test for mercury from one of the companies that tests for heavy metals, such as [Genova](#) or [MercOut](#).

**7. What went well?** I learned a simple technique from Dr. Marty Seligman via my friend Dr. Jo Ilfeld, Success Coach for Entrepreneurs. It only takes 35 minutes and is proven to increase your happiness (and happiness is the key to belonging to yourself and making wise choices – that is, closing the gap between intention and behavior). Every night before you go to bed for just one week, spend 5 minutes creating a quick list of what went well. It could be the weather, or a small achievement with drinking only one glass of wine (instead of 2 or 3). It could be something your loved one said to you. It could be a small victory at work. A large study at the University of Pennsylvania showed that when you do this for one week – a mere 5 minutes of noticing what went well – you are happier 6 months later!



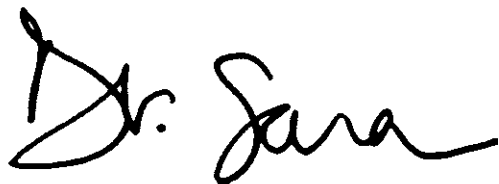
**8. Create your own healthy snack packs.** 80% of the time when I see patients indulge in less-than-healthy options, it's because hunger struck without a nutritious snack in sight. This scenario can be easily avoided by putting together "healthy snack packs," and keeping them in your car, at the office, and in your purse. Some of my favorite snacks include: nuts and seeds, roasted seaweed snacks, 2 scoops of [shake powder](#) in a Ziploc baggie (just mix with water for an instant protein boost!), and >85% dark chocolate.

**9. Practice your new mantra:** “Probably not, but let me think about it.” I’m told that women have a hard time saying “no,” yet we would benefit by saying “no” about 80 percent of the time. As women, we’re wired by hormones to be people-pleasers. The key to getting cortisol back into the Goldilocks position is to say no, but since it’s so hard, I have an alternative that a friend taught me. The next time you get asked to do a task that you really don’t have time for, or you really don’t want to do but feel guilty saying no, say instead: “Probably not, but let me think about it.”

**10. Eat and drink with your non-dominant hand.** One final tip that I learned from Susan Albers and adapted for you is to eat with your non-dominant hand. It’s a great pattern interrupt that can help you with sticking to your progress and staying mindful in the days, weeks, and months to come. I took her suggestion further and also recommend that you drink wine or a cocktail with your non-dominant hand.

My friends, these are just a few suggestions to support your ongoing progress. Remember that perfection isn’t the goal; in fact, imperfect action trumps perfect inaction (as Harry Truman once said). Let us know on our [Facebook page](#) what other strategies help you with maintaining progress!

To your best health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Sara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

### About Dr. Sara

Dr. Sara Gottfried, M.D. teaches women how to balance their hormones naturally so they can rock their mission. She is a Harvard-educated physician, speaker and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Hormone Cure* (check out the new paperback from Simon & Schuster, 2014). She is board-certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and is regularly featured in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Redbook*, *O Magazine*, and *Yoga Journal*. Known for effortlessly blending the seriousness of women's health with playfulness and humor, Dr. Sara's mission is to help women lose weight, feel great, and be vital from their cells to their soul. Learn more at [www.saragottfriedmd.com](http://www.saragottfriedmd.com).

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