

# Get your BOUNCE BACK!

Fighting off post-festive season sluggishness? Pump up your energy with some key nutrients, says **Laia Farran Graves**

**O**verindulgence and the lack of (healthy) activity associated with the festive period can take their toll on even the fittest of gym-toned bodies. But detoxing isn't always the answer. Instead, opt for a diet rich in healthy foods. These are a good source of energy and will help the body eliminate toxins naturally.

Both detoxing and restrictive diets tend to cut out major food groups, such as dairy and meat protein sources. While these diets are lower in calories and therefore result in weight loss, they may also create body imbalances and long-term damage.

Our immune system and organs are designed to clean out the toxins from our bodies. So, eating rich foods over Christmas (or, of course, any other time) can overwork our digestive system and make our body feel sluggish and tired.

'Following a well-balanced, nutrient-rich diet,' says nutritionist Jo Hynes, 'along with regular exercise, will help the body come into balance as the excesses begin to burn away.'

## For a spring in your step, stock up on:

✓ **VEGETABLES** Green, leafy vegetables are rich in B vitamins. These are often called the 'energy vitamins'.

✓ **NUTS** Nuts are excellent sources of the protein and fatty acids necessary for cellular health and good hormone function.

✓ **SEEDS** Like nuts, seeds are rich in protein and essential fatty acids.

### ✓ **LENTILS, CHICPEAS AND BEANS**

A winning combination of complex carbohydrates, protein and minerals, and packed with nutrients to sustain energy and maintain blood sugar balance.

✓ **BROWN RICE** This unrefined complex carbohydrate is rich in B vitamins, fibre, selenium, manganese and the amino acid tryptophan, which helps regulate appetite and improve one's mood.

✓ **YOGHURT** A good source of B vitamins, which your body needs to help convert other nutrients into energy. Yoghurt is also a good source of friendly probiotic bacteria, which help your digestive system to function better.

✓ **FISH** An excellent protein source. Oily fish is particularly rich in omega-3 essential fatty acids, which is great for cell function, the immune system, and mind and mood function.

✓ **WATER** Water will hydrate skin cells, boosting their overall function. It also helps your digestion, energy levels, brain and body temperature.

## Avoid:

### ✗ **ANYTHING REFINED OR PROCESSED**

These foods have had much of the goodness taken out of them and are lacking in nutrients.

✗ **RED MEAT** Red meat – that's beef, venison, lamb and mutton – is rich in saturated fat, hard to digest, and thought to contribute to high cholesterol, heart disease and stroke.

✗ **ALCOHOL** Alcohol strips your body of B vitamins and other minerals and is dehydrating, which places excess strain on your liver.