

# Baby Steps

12  
SIMPLE  
STEPS

TO A HEALTHIER  
LIFESTYLE

12 STEPS TO LIVING HEALTHY!

**STEP  
ONE**

*Give up  
Soda*



# STEP ONE GIVE UP SODAS

## A DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO KICKING THE SODA HABIT

Are you still drinking colas? Is soda your go to caffeine drink for that afternoon pick-me-up? No doubt about it, soda is an addiction and can be compared to tobacco, alcohol or even drugs. It does not do a body good and can cause long term damage to your health.

Currently it is said that on average Americans consume 11 pounds of sugar per person, annually, just from drinking Coca-Cola alone, and in case you were wondering, “that’s an average of 399 servings of Coke products every year, for every American, which is a bit less than the typical 56 gallons of soda the average American drinks annually.” What impact does this have on us as a society?

In my lifetime alone, obesity rates have doubled and over a third of the population in America is considered obese. This is a public health disaster as obesity has a grip on Americans and it is slowly killing us. It creates an economic burden on us as a society. Type 2 diabetes is on the rise. Coronary heart disease, on the rise. A whopping 10% of health care is directed towards obesity related diseases. As much as 9% of that funded by Medicare and Medicaid.

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Soda has been referred to as the “new tobacco” and for good reason. The soda industry definitely targets children in marketing, with 80% of schools in America having contracts with Coke or Pepsi. Soda is beyond a shadow of a doubt unhealthy and disease causing. Soda has become the symbol for a “poor diet” in America.

Some benefits of giving up the soda habit:

- Better focus, better memory and improves the ability to learn.
  - Experience less frequent headaches and migraines, especially if you drink diet soda.
  - Makes real food more flavorful because the taste buds regain their sensitivity.
  - Better influence on those around you, especially if you are a parent.
  - Reduces a person's risk of chronic heart disease (soda drinkers are 20% more likely to have a heart attack)
  - Leads to better oral health.
  - Give you a whiter smile.
  - Improves bone health and decreases the risk of bone loss.
  - Improves kidney and bladder health
  - Can improve the health of your reproductive organs.
  - One of the easiest and most effective ways to lose weight.
  - Prevents premature aging.
  - Helps you live a longer healthier life.
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## **Soda is not budget friendly**

Have you ever stopped to calculate just how much money you spend on soda? It's an \$88 billion industry. If you drink one soda per day you are at minimum spending about \$365 per year. If your family drinks it as well, you know it costs much more than that! You could do a lot with that money, at least I know I could. Not to mention that the money you spend on soda takes away from your health and could cost you medical bills in the future.

Medical Bills? Yes! That's because sugar can create many serious health problems such as obesity, metabolic syndrome and more. It can keep your teeth from looking their whitest, cause bloating, and has been linked to an overactive bladder!

## **Soda is a Health Destroyer**

The soda habit can also put you at a greater risk of developing kidney stones! One soda per day increases your risk of developing a kidney stone by as much as 25% according to my doctor. This is the number one reason I gave up soda, even though I didn't even drink more than one per day back in my soda drinking phase.

My parents never bought it, so I started buying it for myself when I got my first job. I drank maybe one a day for about 10 years. However, after experiencing one kidney stone that took over a month to get rid of (through surgery) I vowed "never again."

Interestingly, drinking coffee, tea and even beer are associated with a lower risk of developing kidney stones.

Whatever you do, please do not trade one bad habit for another. Diet soda is worse for your health than even sugar is! Research shows that artificial sweeteners can affect the healthy balance of gut bacteria, which when upset slows down our immune system and off balances blood sugar control. Both soda and diet soda alike erode your tooth enamel and can exacerbate acid reflux.

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## Age Faster Drinking Soda

You may not know this, but studies show that there is a link between drinking sugary beverages and aging of your cells? In fact the study resulted in the conclusion that the consumption of soda could in fact influence metabolic disease development through accelerated cell aging, i.e. you look older faster when you drink soda. In fact some experts say that drinking one soda per day ages your cellular tissue at the same rate as does smoking. (source)

## Caramel Coloring is Unnatural

After my second son attended his first kindergarten party we were on our way home and he was begging me for water. I asked, "Did the teachers not offer you water?" His response? "All they had was black water and I didn't want to drink that!" You see, for a child who has grown up on natural beverages such as water, milk or even juice drinking "black" water seems UNnatural.

Sodas get the brownish black color from an artificially created phosphorus called "caramel color" which is bad for bone health over time. Caramel color is listed as a possible human carcinogen (4-methylimidazole or 4-MEI) is formed during the manufacturing of coloring.

In nature, phosphorus occurs naturally in legumes and grains, however the chemical version found in soda has been altered to a point that your body has no choice but to absorb it and this leaches calcium out of bones. Caramel color is especially bad for those with kidney disease.

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That's not to say that the clear or yellow sodas are better! Mountain Dew and other citrus-y drinks are made with BVO (brominated vegetable oil) a chemical that has been patented as a flame retardant. This additive is actually banned in many countries. It can lead to nerve disorders and memory loss. Soda companies add BVO to keep the flavoring evenly distributed throughout the beverage. You'll also find disodium EDTA, Yellow 5 and other scary ingredients listed on the back of a yellow soda.

## **Caffeine prevents drowsiness yet causes exhaustion**

One question I get asked often is about insomnia. How do I get a better night's sleep? The more important question is, why aren't you sleeping well?

One of the first things I ask is are you drinking a soda with your dinner? Often the answer is yes. Caffeine blocks serotonin and melatonin and prevents you from getting a restful night's sleep. Caffeine has a half life of about six hours. In other words, if you drink a soda at 6 p.m. with your dinner, it is still in your system at midnight. It's possible that you will still be able to fall asleep, however you will miss out on the important deep sleep phase that is so restorative to your health.

Surprisingly, when people drink too much caffeine it actually has a reverse effect on energy. My husband has experienced this before. One cup of coffee might help get your eyes open, but add to it a soda at lunch and dinner and you've pushed the limit. Because too much caffeine actually dehydrates you and hyper-stimulates the nervous system it can often have the effect of causing exhaustion and fatigue. The best energy your body can use comes from real food.

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Many soda cans are lined with BPA which can cause problem with hormones. BPA is an endocrine disruptor, in other words it mimics the body's hormones and "disrupts" the delicate balance of the endocrine system. The glands of your endocrine system and the hormones they release influence nearly every cell, organ, and function of your body, keeping your mood stable, helping with growth and development, metabolism and tissue function. Does that sound like something a child should be drinking? Not to me!

## **Getting Started Kicking the Habit**

First things first, deciding when to start. If you have a Monday to Friday job, you might want to consider starting on a Saturday so you can get the first two days out of the way at home. If you are not afraid of a few withdrawal symptoms while trying to do your job, feel free to start any day of the week!

Finally, you've made the decision to give up your soda habit so now we need to get prepared. If you consume more than a few sodas per day or if you never drink water you will want to be prepared.

One of the best "new habits" you can form while breaking the soda habit is to have water with you at all times.

Your taste buds may not be accustomed to drinking beverages that do not fizz and are not sweet. Of course, water is the best thing you could drink. You can choose to drink plain water or mineral water with carbonation, otherwise known as Sparkling Water. However, today would be a good day to pick up some flavorful options such as the drinks on my Beverage Replacement List.

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## Beverage Replacement List

- Green Tea
  - Herbal teas, unsweetened of course, or sweetened with Stevia or a even small amount of honey (unless your goal is to lose weight)
  - Sparkling Water or Seltzer Water
  - Sparkling water with a dash of Pomegranate juice (full of antioxidants)
  - Fruit Infused Water or Sparkling Water, same great water, more flavor! I love this fruit infusing water bottle. My favorites are strawberry and lemon or lemon and orange slices!
  - Coconut Water
  - Kombucha
  - Kefir Water
  - Hint Fizz, a water with the essence of fruit it has no sugar or sugar substitutes
  - Lemonade made with real lemons and sweetened with stevia or honey
  - Cold coffee, preferably black or with just cream or half n half
  - Vegetable juices (if you normally get a soda from a fast food stop, check to see if there's a juice bar where you live!). Green juices are so refreshing and healthy, you'll not only kick your soda habit faster, but will also feel wonderful about what you are doing for your body!
  - Almond Milk is a great low calorie drink, but you can also try hemp milk, coconut milk, cashew milk, there are so many to try!
  - Protein Shakes and Protein Smoothies not only hydrate you, but they curb the craving for something sweet and are a far better choice than the empty calories you get from drinking sodas
  - When craving a sweet drink, try homemade hot cocoa!
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Before you head to the supermarket you might want to gather all the soda you have left in your house and either discard it or donate it somewhere before you begin! Pouring it out is a great way of symbolizing your resolve to give it up for good.

While you are out picking up your drink replacements, you may also want to pick up a good B Complex Vitamin although you would preferably want to get your B's from foods that are rich in B vitamins such as spinach, parsley, broccoli, beets, turnip and mustard greens, asparagus, romaine lettuce, lentils, and bell peppers to name a few. Another supplement that can help is omega 3 rich fish oil or krill oil.

It is a good idea to start your day with a protein heavy breakfast. When you are giving up soda you will need to stabilize your blood sugar and therefore minimize any hunger pains you might have mid morning. Another great way to do this is by eating some cinnamon on your breakfast. Eggs are very filling and a healthy choice for breakfast. You could make a nice simple french toast that would incorporate eggs and cinnamon!

## **Simple French Toast**

- egg
- vanilla extract
- cinnamon
- milk, any variety will do, I usually use almond milk
- bread, any will do but I prefer sprouted grain
- honey, maple syrup or other natural sweetener

Mix an egg, dash of vanilla and a shake of cinnamon in shallow bowl. Stir in a tablespoon of milk. Preferably using sprouted grain bread, coat both sides of bread in egg mixture.

Cook bread slices on lightly greased nonstick griddle or skillet on medium heat until browned on both sides. Top with butter, honey, maple syrup, whatever you like.

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## Day One No Soda

Ok, you've decided to give up your soda habit, congratulations! I hope that you have prepared by stocking up on some beverages to try for soda replacements. Make sure that if you are going to work today that you bring some of your replacement beverages with you. If you drink more than 2 sodas per day, you might want to have some ibuprofen or other headache medicine in case you get a caffeine withdrawal headache.

If you don't like to take medications you could also supplement with some magnesium. It is estimated that a large percentage of Americans are deficient in magnesium. We will focus only on how Magnesium can relieve stress and promote relaxation for the purposes of giving up caffeine, however, if you want to take your health to the next level, consider supplementing with transdermal Magnesium such as Magnesium Bath Flakes or Magnesium Oil.

Today I want you to write down all of your reasons for quitting. Just take any piece of paper, or a blank journal just for this week and start listing every single reason that you want to quit. Let me get you started with some of the reasons I quit back in 2004.

- To be healthier
  - To keep from getting another kidney stone
  - To stop consuming pointless, empty calories
  - To save money for better things
  - So I wouldn't be guilted into giving it to my kids
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I think you get the idea why I quit, but what about you? What is the REAL reason you want to quit sodas? Be specific. Write them all down. If you want to succeed and reach your goal of kicking the soda habit, you will need a good reason. When cravings hit, you will need to remind yourself of those reasons, so don't skip this step.

Does your spouse, best friend or children drink soda? Perhaps you could get them to kick the habit with you? Having a friend to keep each other accountable really does increase your likelihood of success.

## **Visualize just how much sugar you consume**

Do you have sugar in your house? If so, you might want to take a plastic baggie and put 17 teaspoons of sugar in it. Tape this to an empty bottle of soda to remind yourself of the amount of sugar you consume in one 20 ounce soda.

## **Can I wean myself off of sodas instead of going cold turkey?**

You may have heard of people going through a process where they “wean” themselves off of sodas and you may be thinking that would be a less disruptive way to quit. I personally prefer to go “cold-turkey” and get the painful withdrawal symptoms over with quicker. However, we are all different and we must take into account our own unique personality when replacing a bad habit with a good one. If you just can't stand the thought of going cold turkey, you need to be honest with yourself; write down how many sodas you drink per day.

Is that number four? Let's use four sodas as an example for how to wean yourself off sodas completely. Before you begin Day One of “no sodas”, you will take four days to “wean” yourself down to zero with the last day also being the first day of the Seven Day Plan.

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- Day One - instead of your usual FOUR sodas, drink only THREE
- Day Two - reduce your soda intake to TWO sodas today, make sure to make up the difference with some of the beverage replacements I have listed
- Day Three - today you will only drink ONE soda. Be prepared to start Day One of the Seven Day Plan tomorrow. Pick up your replacement beverages and any other items you may need to kick the habit!
- Day Four - Technically this is your “Start Day” you will not drink any sodas today. As I mentioned before, when I kicked the soda habit, I went completely cold turkey. Although, I know that my one soda per day habit might be easier to kick than a 4-8 per day habit. If you have ever experienced a kidney stone the pain is enough to make you quit any bad habit, however, you don’t need to experience something as painful as a kidney stone to get you to kick the habit.

During the “weaning phase” and for a few weeks following. Make it a point to drink more water than you thought you ever could! This will help keep cravings away and flood your cells with hydration, making you feel better. Also, it will help to flush your system and help you feel amazing.

## **Is there any way to NOT feel bad while quitting soda?**

Besides drinking water, there are a few supplements that can really help when giving up sugar or caffeine. Below are listed some supplements that can make your journey to become soda free a little bit easier. Prioritized with the most recommended at the top.

- L-Glutamine helps to reduce cravings and repairs the gut, it is recommended to take 500 mg 2-3 times per day on an empty stomach. Some people say it kicks the craving with 10-15 minutes of taking it.
  - Magnesium and Calcium or a Bone Building Complex
  - B Complex
  - Ginseng, in particular Red Ginseng helps to prevent the mood swings associated with giving up soda (and even alcohol!)
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## Day Two No Sodas

Congrats on making it to day two kicking that pesky soda habit! At this point you may be feeling the pain of withdrawals from the caffeine and sugar but know that better days are just ahead.

If possible, spend some time in the outdoors today. You don't have to make it a big project of walking but if you enjoy walking and it makes you relax, go for it. Otherwise, you could just sit outside and enjoy a nice glass of ice cold sparkling water, or whatever floats your boat.

If you haven't already, you might want to complete the "sugar in a bag" project to keep the visual of just how much sugar you are consuming per soda in front of you. This will help you keep your motivation when you are feeling tempted to give in. Keep this visual wherever you go to grab a soda. In your fridge? In your car or at your desk? Keep it where you can be reminded of just what you are giving up. You never know, you may convert someone else to a "soda free" life.

If saving money was part of your motivation to quit this particular exercise will really help you reach your goals. If saving money is simply a bonus benefit you might still want to do this. Another great way to visualize your goals and keep yourself motivated is to put your soda money into a jar (or other container) and keep it where you can drop money in it any time you would normally have purchased a soda.

If you want to further motivate yourself you could make a small sign for your jar naming the reward you will give yourself when you reach your goal. Maybe a visit to the spa for some special pampering, a new outfit (because you just might have lost some weight) or make reservations at your favorite restaurant.

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## Day Two No Sodas

Go ahead and write your GOAL date on your calendar. Be accountable to yourself.

Make sure you are getting plenty of sleep. Getting as much sleep as possible will help you later in the day when you might be tempted to drinking soda to keep you awake. It's normal to feel a dip in energy between 1-3 pm. Partly because your body's natural internal clock has been building up a need for sleep for the last 6-8 hours. It is completely natural to feel that crash coming on but they are definitely more intense when you are not getting adequate sleep. So establish a healthy sleep schedule to maintain steady energy all day long.

What you eat will also contribute to your energy levels throughout the day. Make sure you are providing your body with the fuel it needs to get you through the day. The best way to prevent an intense energy slump is by eating well balanced meals and keeping your blood sugar steady throughout the day. If you skip breakfast your energy slump may be more noticeable. If you skip breakfast and then overeat at lunch your energy slump may require a nap!

Protein at mealtimes helps to satisfy you and keep you full which is the best way to avoid the energy slump that sends many people reaching for a soda. So try your best to get in 25-30 grams of protein within the first hour after you wake up. Then keep your energy steady by including some healthy low fat protein and some slow burning carbs for lunch. A good example would be a mixed veggie sandwich with grilled chicken on top and a side of steamed brown rice.

Don't forget to include a mid-afternoon snack with protein so you will not need a soda to get you through your evening! Protein shakes are a great way to keep you going until dinner. Another great snack is raw vegetables dipped in hummus. Lean protein + healthy slow burning carbs = steady energy.

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## Day Three No Sodas

Day three is usually the day most people start to feel an improvement. If you started over the weekend and today is your first day at work with no soda make sure you head to work with a game plan that equals success:

- Make sure you take plenty of hydrating drinks from my list of replacement beverages, take a cooler if necessary.
- Take breaks from sitting, if possible a stand up desk really helps to prevent you from feeling drowsy and actually increases your focus.
- Exercise actually helps create more energy rather than drains it. So either hit the gym before work or even on your lunch hour if you get one.
- Stretching at your desk or during your lunch break or “coffee breaks” can also help to boost your energy levels if you start to feel like you need a soda. While technically it falls under “exercise” yoga, pilates and barre all help to increase energy from stretching.
- When the time comes that you would normally reach for a soda get up and take a quick walk around the office or go look out the window for a few minutes to give yourself an energy burst from the sun.

Take a break from your computer screen long enough to allow your eyes to relax again. Focusing on the computer causes an energy draining eye strain after several hours.

- Sometimes it helps to listen to music while you work if possible.  
Stay cool. If you start to feel a lack of energy or a sugar craving, grab a cold pack and lay it on the back of your neck just below your hairline, as this will give you a burst of energy.
  - Use peppermint oil. Peppermint oil is a natural energizer, so keep some handy for those moments throughout the day when you need a pick me up. When you feel like you might start reaching for a soda, grab your peppermint oil instead and take a nice big whiff of it. This should not only give you a bit of energy but also help your concentration and focus.
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- While I'm not a fan of chewing gum, some people swear it improves their mood and research actually shows that the effects of chewing gum include better performance on tests, better memory, and better mood. Now get this; studies show that chewing a stick of mint gum can decrease sleepiness! Chewing gum can even help to reduce anxiety. So if this habit breaking plan is stressing you out, grab some gum! Just please, chew politely if you are in a shared work environment! Take breaks from sitting, if possible a stand up desk really helps to prevent you from feeling drowsy and actually increases your focus.

Let me take a minute to remind you that some of the benefits of giving up soda include younger looking skin! Did you know that sugary sodas increase the aging of your body's cells the same amount as smoking? Researchers have come to the conclusion that drinking a mere 20 ounces of soda per day is linked to an additional 4.6 years of biological aging and is comparable to smoking. (source)

Have I mentioned that when you give up sodas for water or healthy vegetable juices, tea and coffee you'll actually give your immune system a fighting chance? Regular sodas are obviously full of sugar and therefore keep your immune system paralyzed for hours after you drink one. Diet sodas are also bad for your immune system as they affect your gut bacteria which can have an impact on literally everything from your blood sugar levels, immune system, to maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding diabetes.

So now is the time to start banking on better health in the very near future.

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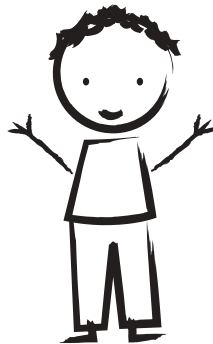
## Day Four No Sodas

### Make “not drinking soda” your new habit.

Experts say it takes 21 days to create a new habit. I will be with you for the first seven days of your new habit of not drinking soda. After that, you need to keep yourself accountable and stick to your new habit for 21 days so that you will have a new habit for LIFE! The easiest way to track your new habit is simply to make an X on each calendar day that you have succeeded in NOT drinking soda.

If you would like something a bit more in your face (like your smart phone) you could try a habit tracker such as:

- Habitforge
- Strides
- Coach.Me
- Habit List



Instead of drinking a soda, try carbonated water, it's great! Pellegrino and Perrier are both carbonated mineral water that will give your mouth that fizzy feeling without the sugar. You can even buy Perrier by the case at Costco, it is often on sale!

If you absolutely must have a soda, try to cheat clean and cheat smart by drinking something like Virgil's Zero Root Beer, sweetened with Stevia. Virgil's even makes a Dr. Pepper substitute called Dr. Better

Create a new ritual. If you used to drink a soda every afternoon, try taking a walk instead, or drinking hot water with a drop of peppermint oil.

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## Day Five No Sodas

### Make “not drinking soda” your new habit.

Ok, now it's time to really focus on drinking some water. If you prefer your water with some flavor you might want to learn this trick for making it taste much better. If you muddle your herbs (mint is a favorite) the water will take on a stronger flavor.

Although it looks beautiful some people find that the peeling of citrus fruit creates a bitter flavor, so you may opt to peel your lemons and oranges before infusing your water.

Create triggers that will help you remember to drink water. One of my triggers is waking up. As soon as I wake up in the morning, the very first thing I do is fill a glass that holds 16 ounces and turn it up. I drink that water right away just to start the rehydration process. Another trigger for me is going to the gym. I automatically fill my water jug when I head to the gym. You can create triggers for pretty much whatever works for you, some examples are:

Heading to work

Leaving work

Commuting, finish before your destination

During or after a workout

Every time you go into the kitchen at home, pick up a glass



Other than upon waking, I only “down” 8 ounce glasses of water at a time. By that I mean I do not “guzzle” down a large bottle of water, especially while working out. I don't particularly like the feeling of a belly full of sloshy water, so I just limit my “all at once” water drinking to about 8 ounces. Although, I always have a “sipper” nearby. If you sip on water all day you will not likely feel thirsty throughout the day and as a reminder when you “feel thirsty” you are already dehydrated. Drink before you “feel” thirsty!

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When I was in the military we were required to drink two glasses of water before each meal. We literally could not pick up our silverware until we drank the water. The water was also room temperature.

Author and efficiency expert Tim Ferriss suggests that drinking ice water helps you burn a few extra calories. Traditional Chinese Medicine suggests that drinking warm water helps preserve and protect organs and improves blood circulation and helps to control appetite. I honestly find it easier to drink more water if it is room temperature than ice cold, but do what works for you, just make sure you are drinking enough.

## **Day Six No Sodas**

### **Almost there...**

We have almost reached the end of the first week Soda Free. Are you drinking enough water? If your quest to give up sodas has left you dehydrated because you are not keeping track of your water intake, you might consider downloading an app to help you drink more water. Some good ones are:

- PlantNanny (I used this one for a while until my kids started watering my plant whether I drank the water or not ha ha)
  - OasisPlaces
  - iDrated
  - Eight Glasses a Day
  - WaterLogged
  - TapIt Water
  - WeTap
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**Here's a few recipes you might like to enhance your water:**

- Want water with a kick? Try a few slices of cucumber and a slice of jalapeño!
- Stomach feeling sad, missing your soda? Try a few slices of ginger with a slice of pear!
- Need a refresher? How about a sprig of Rosemary with a chunk of watermelon!
- Nothing beats berries! One of my favorites is to freeze raspberries and blackberries and use them as “ice” in my sparkling water!
- The Old standby: lemon and orange slices (most restaurants will have lemon and some will have oranges)
- Something special: Pineapple and ginger

Have you ever looked at all the varieties of tea available in your average supermarket? This is nothing compared to going to a tea shop! ONE cool thing about drinking herbal tea is the health benefits gained. I actually have a YouTube video tour of my Tea Cabinet, but I'll list some of my favorite teas here:

- Pretty much anything by Republic of Tea but especially: Get Burning, Get Limber and Get Happy
- Paromi Tea but especially: Sleep with me tea and Cinnamon Chai
- Trader Joe's Spiced Chai
- Tazo Teas



## **Day Seven No Sodas**

### **Maintain your new habit**

You've made it through a week without a soda, now make your new habit stick. Go ahead and mark your calendar for 14, 21 and 28 days. If you made it this far it only gets easier from here. At the end of each week give yourself a good pat on the back, a reward or whatever you like to really celebrate the fact that you worked hard and you have made the choice to really improve your health.

It is uber important to maintain your consistency during this first month if you really want this habit to stick. Keep your visuals up for the first month so that you have a reminder to execute your habits each day.

If you didn't find an accountability partner in the beginning, maybe you can make an announcement on social media that you have successfully quit drinking sodas and find someone to mentor. Anytime you teach someone to do something you are also teaching yourself and solidifying your resolve to stick to it. The longer you remain soda free, the more of a chance you will be soda free for life!

Do not allow temptation in your home again! Once you remove the sodas from your home make sure you don't bring them back in again. No need to set yourself up for a willpower test! If you have a party, you could go soda-free, like we do OR you could allow your guests to BYOS -- Bring Your Own Soda! If you do provide soda at a party, the best way to avoid the temptation is to send it home with guests who still have not kicked the habit!

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Another avenue of temptation is when revisiting those places where you are used to ordering a soda. For example, you go to your favorite pizza spot and the waitress knows exactly what you want to drink. Mentally prepare yourself before going in by rehearsing your statement of resolve in your head, or aloud if you are comfortable with that. "I gave up soda so can you bring me a sparkling water please?" So simple, yet so hard to do!

To help you stay cognizant of the benefits, you may want to write out what improvements you have noticed during your first few days, weeks or months of being soda free. Did you lose weight? Gain energy? Sleep better? Write it down and post it somewhere you will be sure to see it as a reminder of all you have gained from giving up soda.

## **Day Eight No Sodas**

Congratulations on successfully completing the Seven Day Plan to Give Up Sodas for Good! You have just joined me in a step that will improve the quality of your life and the lives of those around you. Now spread the news!

**Are you still having intense cravings and/or headaches?**

Sometimes, extremely intense cravings can be caused by health imbalances. Candida, low hormone production, low thyroid, blood sugar imbalance, malnutrition, brain chemistry imbalance, food allergies, fatty acid deficiencies can all intensify the craving for sodas (caffeine and sugar). If you have given up soda and are still having major cravings you might consider talking to your healthcare provider about having some tests done to rule out the possibility of deficiencies.

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One of the most important tips to remember when you are giving up soda is that you do not replace the habit with another bad habit.

Drink water in place of soda as much as possible. When your cravings are super intense or you feel your resolve failing, have a drink from the Beverage Replacement List.

