

Welcome to Free From February!

Below is a breakdown of what we're collectively being free-from along with a how and why. I encourage you to meet all of these as they work in tandem with each other, and there's also a space for you to add your own personal free-from's should you so desire.

As you're living this for the next month, feel free to tag me (@the_leyah) and hashtag #freefromfebruary on your social media posts and stories.

There's a facebook group linked at the bottom of this document where I hope you'll all join so that we can create some community here as well. This page is for questions, advice, input, success stories, etc. This page is NOT for complaining or advertising. Show up with your needs, be eager to learn if advice is what you seek, and otherwise celebrate your successes.

Free From:

Alcohol -

How: don't consume any alcoholic beverages.

Why: alcohol has a lot of negative impacts, physiologically and mentally. On a physical level, alcohol reduces liver clearance. It reduces your liver's ability to clear excess hormones, which contributes to hormonal imbalances such as estrogen dominance which has a ripple effect on endocrine function creating a reduction of thyroid function, as well as an increase of sex hormone binding globulin which in turn lower free testosterone levels. It also depresses adrenal function, limits your body's ability to enter into deep sleep cycles, weakens immune system, and reduces your insulin sensitivity. Your body recognizes alcohol as a toxin and halts numerous, important physiological processes to prioritize clearing it (and it may take 2-3 days to fully clear it from the body), including digestion by diverting bloodflow away from the GI tract, muscle protein synthesis, and neurotransmitter production/communication. In a nutshell, while it's fun for you, it's not fun for your body. Furthermore, while it may be enjoyable in the moment, consider how you feel after drinking. Are you ready to kick ass? Do you feel productive? Are you happy? More often than not, the answer is "no". After

drinking, we typically feel lethargic. The body is undergoing repair and detoxification. We're hungover. We want to sit on the couch, sleep, do nothing. How are we to be productive, creative, grateful, happy, and crushing our goals under these circumstances?

Highly Processed Foods -

How: the chips, candy, pizza, fast food, quest bars, walden farms, ice cream, etc. don't go in your body for the month! At the end of this document is a basic meal template and grocery list that will hopefully help you if this seems daunting.

Why: ultimately, this free-from challenge is geared towards helping you feel better, think better, and perform better. Highly processed foods have a high correlation with obesity, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses. Simply put, they provide a lot of calorie density with low-no micronutrients. They don't serve your body in the slightest. Similarly as we did with alcohol, think about how you feel after eating those foods. Are you energized and ready to get moving? How does your stomach feel? Do they digest well, or are you gassy, bloated, cramping, having sluggish digestion or irregular bowel movements? Remove the junk, fill your plate with nutrient dense foods. You'll feel so much better, I swear. I recommend limiting/avoiding artificial sweeteners during this time as well.

Social Media after 7pm -

How: turn off your alerts and put down your phone after 7pm. Spend some time with your family/friends/pets/plants. Read a book. Do some writing/journaling. Take up knitting. Go for a walk. Have a dance party.

Why: we are so inundated with bluelights and screen time for most of the day, and while social media is a beautiful opportunity to connect with others, a lot of us use it either as a distraction from what needs to be paid attention to (be it something in our environment or something within ourselves), or as a comparison tool that fuels our negativity about our selves and our lives. Put it down. Turn it off for a couple hours/night. You won't miss anything - it will all be there the next day. Give your mind (and your eyes) a break.

Clutter -

How: find one thing in your house/car/work space that you're pointlessly keeping, that you truly don't need (or maybe even

want) and get rid of it. Donate it, sell it, give it to a friend or toss it, whatever your preference is. But get it out of your space.

Why: a cluttered environment is a cluttered mind. We tend to unintentionally hoard things, thinking "oh I might need that" when we truly haven't used in a very, very long time, nor will we (thinking about the numerous charging cables I have that don't seem to go to anything and haven't been touched in a year). You might also pick items that you have that you keep but don't actually like. Marie Condo's mantra is applicable - if it doesn't bring you joy...

Mess -

How: clean one thing every day (that's not your kitchen, which ideally is getting cleaned every day anyways LOL).

Why: just as a cluttered space is a cluttered mind, a messy space is a messy mind. But moreso, have you ever noticed that your anxiety and depression seem louder, your lethargy is harder to overcome, and your negative thoughts run more rampant when you're surrounded by mess? Ever noticed that, even though you don't *want* to do anything, it's hard to relax when things are messy/dirty? Cultivate a tidy, clean home/working space so that you can truly relax at the end of the day, so that you don't sit there plagued by all the thoughts of what you need to do (that you aren't doing). Instead, you can sit and enjoy a calm, clean, cared for space in a calm, clean, cared for body.

Negativity -

How: spend 5-10 minutes in intentional gratitude daily, followed by 5-10 minutes of positive self/life affirmations.

Why: where the mind goes, the body (and energy) follows. If you're spending a lot of time thinking about everything that's wrong in life, what's worrying and frustrating you, what you're feeling the lack of, you'll continue to experience those things. Shift your focus to the good, to what you have, to where you're going. This is especially important regarding your self perception. Take a day and monitor your thoughts. Keep a note section in your phone, or a notebook on hand, and document your thoughts. How many negative thoughts do you think about your body? About your work? Your life situation? Moving forward, as you develop thought awareness, start redirecting them. If you have a negative thought, immediately take action and voice something positive, something rooted in gratitude, something that

encourages you to dig deeper and rise higher rather than falling further into complacency and desperation. Your attitude will start to change, and with it your outlook. And as you become more positive, more joyful, you'll begin to attract the experiences you DO truly want, rather than feeling stuck in a position that you don't enjoy.

Indoors/Controlled Climates -

How: spend at least one hour per day OUTSIDE! Get your ass out into nature, into the environment that we were actually designed for. Go for a walk, a hike, have a small sit spot/meditation in a wild bit of woods, hit the slopes, stroll the beach, shoot, even just sit out on your patio in the sunshine for an hour. No matter what it is, get outside and out of your comfortable, climate controlled home/work space and breathe fresh air.

Why: a lot of people are really sad, and I attribute this to the fact that we spend almost all of our time separating ourselves from the environment we were created to inhabit (aka NATURE). The woods are healing. The beach is healing. The mountains are healing. The water is healing. Go back to them, even if it's your first time truly being IN them. Go back to them. Not only does nature provide incredible mental and emotional benefits, it also provides physical benefits. Studies have shown that those who spend a significant amount of time playing outdoors have stronger immune systems, stronger and healthier gut function, they sleep better, move better, breathe better. So, get outside. Be free from your air conditioned cave.

Excuses -

How: if there's a moment you find yourself not wanting to do what you need to do, be it something in this challenge or one of your other responsibilities, throw a middle finger to that feeling and get it done anyways.

Why: many people lack self-trust. What this means is, over years of saying "I'm going to ____." and then not doing it, not following through, we've taught ourselves that we are not reliable. How many times have you resolved to get fit at new years? How many times have you said you'll fold the laundry only to.. Not? How many times have you said you'll call someone, read something, stop watching TV before bed, start going to therapy, only to never actually do those things? If you had a friend who was constantly saying that they would do something, go somewhere, be something for/with you but consistently flaked at the last

minute, what would your opinion of them be? Would you trust them to follow through and keep their word? Of course not. Because they've demonstrated time and again that they are not trustworthy. The same system applies to YOU with YOU. Start rebuilding that internal sense of trust with yourself. Someone may have told you that self care starts with baths and facemasks, but it actually starts with integrity and trust. It starts with telling the truth, and keeping your own word to yourself.

If eating unprocessed leaves you wondering what to eat, below are a few quick meal suggestions alongside a grocery list. I invite you to explore new recipes and new methods of preparing food. Make cooking for yourself a ritual.

Breakfasts:

Protein Oat Bowl - mix cooked oats with protein powder, top with berries and nut butter.

Potato & Egg Scramble - fry cooked, chopped potatoes & diced onions in coconut oil/grassfed butter and have alongside scrambled eggs/egg whites and canadian/turkey bacon.

Protein Smoothie - add protein powder, milk/non-dairy milk, spinach, berries, and banana to the blender and blend up! Add ice for thicker consistency.

Juevos Rancheros - lightly fry corn tortillas in coconut/olive oil, fill with fried eggs and top with salsa and chopped spinach.

Lunch/Dinner:

Chicken & Rice with Veg - roast chicken alongside jasmine rice with a side of steamed/roasted mixed vegetables/broccoli/carrots.

Taco Bowls - cooked ground turkey with brown rice and black beans seasoned with taco seasoning, top with salsa, pico de gallo, fat free plain greek yogurt (or sour cream), and cilantro.

Spaghetti Squash Spaghetti - roast spaghetti squash until tender to fork, scrape out and mix with marinara sauce & ground beef/turkey, top with parmesan cheese.

SWEET/SNACK:

Rice Cakes - top with nut butter, coconut oil, raspberries, and dark chocolate. Or for a salty/savory snack, top with canned tuna salad, mustard, and pickles.

Greek Yogurt Bowl - mix with protein powder, dark chocolate, berries/banana, and shredded coconut.

When in doubt, keep it stupid simple. Protein + carb + fat + fiber. Meals don't have to be complex. They can be as simple as chicken, rice, green beans, and coconut oil, or turkey, sweet potato, broccoli, and nut butter. Keep. It. Simple.

Grocery list:

PROTEIN:

Chicken breast
Ground turkey
Whole eggs
Egg whites
Protein powder
Canned tuna or salmon
Fat free plain greek yogurt

CARBS:

Sweet/white potato
Jasmine/brown rice
Rice cakes
Ezekiel bread

FRUIT:

Raspberries
Bananas
Apples
Tangerines
Pineapple

VEGETABLES:

Frozen mixed vegetables
Broccoli
Green beans
Spinach
Onion
Tomato

FATS:

Coconut/olive oil
Almond/peanut butter
Grassfed butter
Shredded coconut
Dark chocolate

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/213907377615524/>