

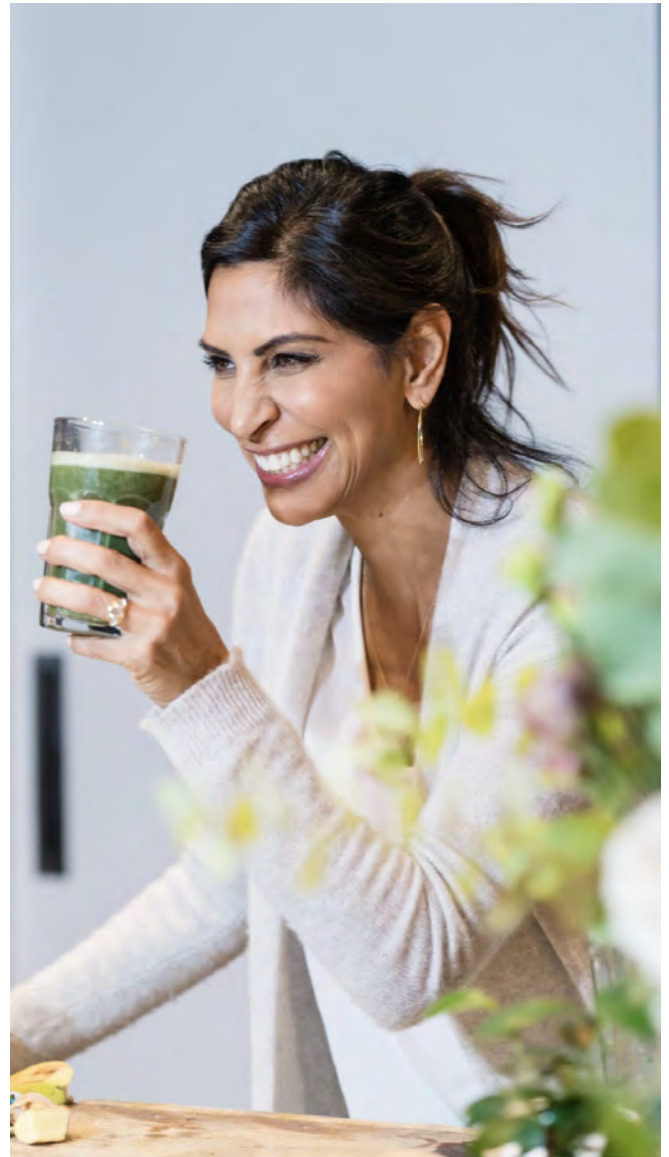
# Detox Your Kitchen

**Sandie Fredriksson** is the creator of the 8 Week Plan 'Healthy Habits for Life'. She teaches busy women how to lose weight, have more energy and put their health on autopilot.

Sandie shares four simple ways to turn your kitchen into 'Healthy Living HQ' and kickstart a lifetime of healthy eating

**W**hen it comes to changing your eating habits, the hardest thing can be knowing where to start. And let's face it, your kitchen really does have the power to make or break you, no matter how good your intentions.

In my past life, I had no emotional connection to cooking and being in my kitchen felt like an awkward friendship. I limited my visits to toast, a quick plate of pasta or heating up the posh ready meals I would grab on my way home from work. That is until I got diagnosed with breast cancer. It was time to stop being complacent about the way I was fuelling my body. After months of trawling through countless books and documentaries on nutrition, I left my job in the city and took the Natural Chef diploma at The College of Naturopathic Medicine. Organising my kitchen and building a repertoire of simple recipes turned out to be the biggest leap forward on my journey to health. It's why I created my kitchen detox program 'Healthy Living HQ' to help my clients fall in love with cooking at home.



This process will look different depending on who I am working with. You might be looking for a total overhaul and eyeing up a Thermomix or Instant Pot, or you might simply want to get the basics in place with a few easy recipes to kickstart your healthy eating habits.

Whatever your goal, I suggest keeping it simple and intentional to start with, and gradually introducing more over time. The aim is to build your confidence and help you create a space you look forward to spending time in.

## 1. *The Big Purge*

Put a good couple of hours aside to clear out your kitchen cupboards and prepare to be ruthless. I recommend not doing this when you are hungry or you might be tempted to hold onto the Doritos as an emergency snack!

Become a label-reading detective. Ingredients that are highest in quantity are required to be listed first on the label. As a rule, the fewer ingredients the better (ideally a maximum of five) and stay away from anything you can't pronounce. Be sure to always check the sugar content - you'll be surprised where it's lurking, from salad dressings to low-fat yoghurts. I give my clients a list of 53 other names used for sugar to stop them from falling into the hidden-sugars trap.

Ditch all packet and processed 'food'. These are not food; they're food-like products created in labs, not kitchens. Many of the additives used are substances our bodies don't even know how to deal with. By eating them, you are not only increasing your toxic load but over time, you are risking chronic inflammation. This can damage your cells and leave you exposed to lifestyle diseases such as cancer and type 2 diabetes. I'm not saying you can't use some shortcuts like stock cubes and high-quality tinned ingredients. I'm simply asking you to look past that photo of the Italian Mamma on the front of the sugar-laden pasta sauce jar.



Pimp your pantry.  
A few simple changes can go a long way to getting you that lovely, organised look you've been coveting on Pinterest. If you have a small kitchen, tiered shelving is a great way to maximise space.

## 2. Organise & Style

An organised kitchen will dramatically improve your decision-making capacity. Having fruit on display and removing unhealthy snacks is a highly underrated strategy.

Pimp your pantry. A few simple changes can go a long way to getting you that lovely, organised look you've been coveting on Pinterest. If you have a small kitchen, tiered shelving is a great way to maximise space. Use a mixture of tall and short glass jars to store your staples such as steel-cut oats, brown rice and lentils and an assortment of nuts and seeds. I like to keep all my dry spices in 70ml square Kilner jars lined up in a Buckingham 6-tier spice and herb rack that I mounted inside my pantry door. A chalkboard labels kit will also help you to create an appealing look.

Style your fridge and declutter your freezer. Using glass storage rather than plastic will mean you don't have to worry about nasty chemicals leaking into your food. So ditch the leftover Chinese takeaway containers you've been hoarding and hold onto those coconut oil jars instead. They're perfect for storing soups and stews in the freezer - just be careful not to fill them all the way to the top, or they may crack. Alternatively, invest in freezer-safe glass storage with a leak-proof tight seal - you don't want to have to investigate an unidentified liquid that's leaked all over your leafy greens.

Shape your environment to reinforce your daily rituals. Use aesthetically pleasing tools and visual cues to help establish good habits. For example, if you decide you want to start each day with my health-promoting lemon and ginger water, invest in a beautiful glass mug, such as the Kinto Unitea 510ml, to make this an experience you look forward to. A good tip is to keep your green powder, herbal boosters, echinacea, aloe vera etc. all in one place, where you will easily see them and be prompted to take them. I keep mine on the same shelf in the door of my fridge. Another smart strategy is 'habit stacking', which simply means pairing a habit you want to remember to do with something you are already motivated to do. This might look like keeping your dedicated supplements tray next to the coffee machine you habitually head towards in the morning.

### A superior blender:

I wholeheartedly recommend splurging on a Vitamix Blender; its tough, high-speed blades give you the smoothest smoothies, soups and hummus. I use mine at least once a day. As an alternative (but smaller) option, the nutribullet sits right up there in the blender battle.



### 3. *Get Swapping*

You don't have to overhaul your whole diet in one go to eat healthier. Here just five of the list of ingredient swaps that I work on with my clients.

**Stock up on healthy oils:** For salad dressings opt for organic, cold-pressed, extra virgin olive oil (keep in a dark bottle away from the light to stop it from degrading) or high-quality organic nut and seed oils, which should always be stored in the fridge. Hemp seed oil is a great option, as it is rich in essential fatty acids. Most shop-bought dressings are best avoided because of the sugar and preservatives they contain. When it comes to cooking, especially at high temperatures, coconut oil or ghee (clarified butter) are generally the best options, although, with some ingredients such as tomatoes, I do find that only olive oil will do.

**Sweet Swaps:** Whilst local raw honey or high-grade maple syrups are a better choice than sugar, they both still trigger an insulin response in the body and so are best used sparingly. Low-calorie options like stevia or xylitol can also be fine occasionally but I want to encourage you to opt for more wholesome ingredients. A little cinnamon adds sweetness to porridge, balsamic vinegar is delicious in a salad dressing and if you like your tea sugary, why not try a herbal option that includes fennel or liquorice root? When I encourage clients to make these substitutions for just three days, they often find returning to sugars and syrups unpalatable.



Table salt substitutes: White table salt has been stripped of its mineral content and contains anti-clumping agents (yuk!) that may be harmful to our health. Ditch it and switch to mineral-rich Himalayan pink salt or sea salt instead. Another healthy condiment to consider is seaweed flakes such as dulse or kombu, especially if you're keen to add iodine to your diet. Seaweed also reduces the oestrogen burden in the body which explains its breast cancer-protective credentials.

Nut milk vs cows' milk: If you are consuming dairy, choose organic, grass-fed wherever possible. Unfortunately dairy is one of the most common allergenic foods in our diets. Nut milks are an impressively versatile alternative, for everything from smoothies and soups to baking and sauces. They also tend to have fewer calories and higher water content. Choose the unsweetened varieties.

Filter your tap water: The quality of the water you drink is important, and I always recommend a water filter to clients. After all, it has to be filtered somewhere and your liver is already busy performing over 500 other vital functions. A Brita jug is a great budget-friendly solution, whilst a bulkier, under-counter reverse osmosis system sits at the more effective (and expensive) end of the spectrum.

#### *4. Upgrade Your Toolkit*

This is not about clever gadgets that end up never making it out the drawer. It's about the basics that make cooking at home feel easy. I have a thorough 'recommended equipment list' I use with my clients, but here are a few essentials that belong in any healthy kitchen.

A superior blender: I wholeheartedly recommend splurging on a Vitamix Blender; its tough, high-speed

blades give you the smoothest smoothies, soups and hummus. I use mine at least once a day. As an alternative (but smaller) option, the nutribullet sits right up there in the blender battle.

Pots and Pans: Again, you'll be using these a lot, so it's important to invest in the right ones. Avoid non-stick cookware that is coated with potentially harmful chemicals: healthy options include stainless steel, ceramic, cast-iron and enameled cast iron. Establish what works best with your cooker (gas or induction) and of course, consider your budget. I source mine from the ProCook website and I also like the Green Pan brand.

A vegetable steamer: When it comes to veggies, steaming trumps boiling every time as it retains more of the nutrients and flavour in your food. Options range from a collapsible basket style to multi-tier steamer pans.

A veggie brush: I encourage my clients to buy organic whenever possible which usually means their root vegetables will need a good scrub. Don't let a little dirt put you off. A bit of high-quality soil can be a beneficial source of good bacteria for your gut.

Sprouting jars: Perhaps not essential, but something I can't recommend enough. Sprouted seeds are highly nutritious, but if you're buying them from a supermarket, you're most certainly overpaying. You can grow these tiny nutritional powerhouses in just a few days, on just a few inches of your worktop. You'll find an entire blog post about this on my website including where to source your seeds and sprouting jars.

A thorough kitchen detox can have a dramatic impact on your healthy-eating journey. So, if a personalised overhaul is just what you need to get going, then reach out to me via my website.

Unfortunately dairy is one of the most common allergenic foods in our diets. Nut milks are an impressively versatile alternative, for everything from smoothies and soups to baking and sauces. They also tend to have fewer calories and higher water content. Choose the unsweetened varieties.

# *A few of my kitchen favourites*

Here is where you can find a few of my own healthy-eating essentials. I'm not in any way affiliated to these products - they are just some of the things you would find in my own kitchen.

1



2



3



4



6



5



- 1, VonShef Freezer-safe glass storage ([amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk))
- 2, KINTO Unitea 510ml glass mug ([selfridges.com](http://selfridges.com))
- 3, Vitamix Blender ([johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com))
- 4, Collapsible steamer basket ([procook.co.uk](http://procook.co.uk))
- 5, Vegetable Brush ([riverford.co.uk](http://riverford.co.uk))
- 6 Eschenfelder sprouting jars ([amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk))