

EXTREME DETOX

Perennially unhealthy fashion photographer **THOMAS KNIGHTS** feels transformed by a detox retreat in Goa

Let me start by saying when I embarked on this journey I was not, in any way shape or form, a healthy person. And recently it was getting far worse. I was drinking all the time, partying a lot and generally not taking care of myself. I put on a bit of weight, my skin wasn't great and my mental health was pretty low. I had no idea it was all connected, and especially that my low self-esteem was directly linked to my lack of nutrition. I was in for a shock.

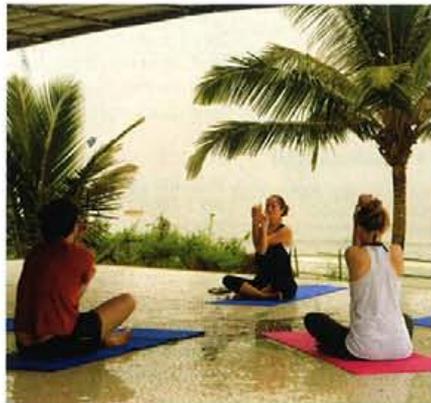
The manager of The Beach House – a modern, wellness retreat in Goa, India – was a lovely yet commanding lady called Kate. She explained that everyone who comes to the retreat for the 'Total Body Rebalance' comes at the right time for them. Before I arrived at the retreat I still wasn't quite aware of the extreme nature of what I was about to embark on. But I diligently started the 'pre-detox' administered by Kate, something that apparently would make the detox more effective.

For the week-long pre-detox I was given a list of foods that I could and couldn't eat. These were split into two lists, Acid and Alkaline. I was aiming to create an alkaline PH state in my body, which effectively meant I became a vegan. An Alkaline PH is good because viruses like colds can't survive in an alkaline environment.

We arrived at the beach house itself on Sunday morning. It's a beautiful closed retreat that is affiliated with a main hotel, but completely separate from everyone else. There are only eight self-contained guest suites, so the whole week was dedicated to us. This personalised service is what The Beach House and its parent company Sanda are all about. The main 'house' was literally on the beach and had a welcoming feel. The whole retreat was extremely attractive and well put together with numerous staff ready to help and assist us.

Our first meal was a light lunch of salad and beans and a fruit drink. Then in our welcome talk it became clear that this would be the last time we would see food for the duration of our stay.

The 'Total Body Rebalance' programme is unique to Sanda and was created by an expert team of nutritionists, psychotherapists and doctors. It aims to remove all the toxins from your body by shutting down your



digestive system. By not eating solid foods, and taking various supplements you are able to completely cleanse your body of a lot of the impurities that have built up over the years. Supplementary to this were the twice daily, self induced, coffee enemas which removed all the food that sits rotting in your intestines for years and years. There is also a garlic enema on day four that kills any parasites living in your system.

Convinced early on that this was all having a huge effect on my physical health, I decided to open up to the possibility of engaging with my mental health, something I've always kept highly guarded. When it came to my turn to face a private psychotherapy session with Kate, I was so nervous but took advantage of the opportunity and spoke openly about many things I've kept secret for years. She mainly listened but it was amazing what an

effect this had: I felt that I was releasing all the toxins in my mind, and I felt lighter for it. It made me question where I have been going wrong with relationships and the direction of my life. Problems from my past I now feel I can face head on and hopefully one day move past.

On the last day we were re-measured and broke the fast. I lost over half a stone in five days and over two inches round my waist. My biological age dropped from 29 to 26 – my real age, and my PH was alkaline. I was amazed with the dramatic changes in such a short space of time.

Many *Attitude* readers who spend a lot of time building muscle might be put off with a detox of this nature – the fast, the weight loss and the no-exercise policy. But in fact body builders who have gone on the programme actually experienced a loss of body fat, not muscle which left them with more defined bodies. Also this programme is perfect for anyone who feels their lifestyle is particularly hedonistic. You get a new body, a clean slate and boost of energy. It might kick start a change, or allow you to keep going. Either way you feel the benefits immediately.

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