

A CORE GUIDE

Low-Tox Living

Small, calm swaps to lighten your body's daily load — without fear, without overwhelm.

BETTER OUT CO.

Lighten the load

For all the talk of “detox,” here is the quiet truth: your body already has a magnificent detox system — your liver, kidneys, gut, skin and lymph, working every second to clear what doesn’t belong. It doesn’t need a magic tea or a punishing cleanse. What it needs is for us to stop overwhelming it.

Because the load really has changed. Our great-grandparents met a handful of man-made chemicals in a lifetime; we meet thousands — in our food packaging, our cookware, our cleaning sprays, our skincare, the very water from the tap. None of it is cause for panic. But the science is honest: this constant, low-level exposure adds up, and it asks something of a body that was never designed for it.

Low-tox living isn’t about flushing toxins out. It’s about letting fewer of them in.

That reframe changes everything. You don’t need to live in fear of every label or chase an impossible purity. But don’t mistake that for needing to go slow: much of this is simpler and faster than people assume. A single decisive weekend can clear most of the plastic, the synthetic fragrance and the harshest chemicals from a home. Some swaps you’ll make in an afternoon; others as you learn. Either way, the direction is the same — fewer inputs, a lighter load.

This guide moves honestly through your home — the kitchen, the food you eat, the bathroom, the cleaning cupboard — with real, doable swaps and the plain truth about why each one matters. Go as fast as your clarity allows. Start with one, or clear a whole room in a day. There’s no prize for taking years.

Start here: the five that matter most

If the whole idea feels like a lot, begin here. These five give you the greatest relief for the least effort — the ones genuinely worth doing first.

1 Get plastic out of heat & food

Never heat food in plastic, and stop drinking from plastic bottles. Heat and time leach plastic compounds straight into what you eat. Swap to glass and stainless steel — the single highest-impact change here.

2 Filter your water

Tap water can carry chlorine, heavy metals and other residues. A good filter is one purchase that quietly cleans up something you drink and cook with every single day.

3 Change your cooking oil

Swap industrial seed and vegetable oils for stable, traditional fats — olive oil, butter, ghee, coconut. One of the most meaningful shifts for everyday health (more overleaf).

4 Ditch synthetic fragrance

“Fragrance” on a label can hide dozens of undisclosed chemicals. Drop plug-ins, synthetic candles and heavily perfumed products — let your home smell of nothing, or of real things.

5 Read one label a day

You don’t need to memorise chemistry. Just start turning packages over and reading — awareness alone will reshape your trolley over time. We’ll show you what to look for.

THE GENTLE TRUTH

You will never be perfectly “tox-free” — no one is, and chasing it only breeds anxiety. The goal is simply *lighter*: fewer inputs, a less burdened body, more margin for it to thrive. Every single swap counts, and none has to happen today.



SECTION ONE

The Kitchen

*Where the most exposures hide – and where the
easiest, highest-impact swaps live.*

Plastic & your food

If there's one place to begin, it's here. Plastics can release compounds — like BPA and phthalates — that behave in the body like imposter hormones, nudging the delicate systems that govern metabolism, mood and fertility. And two things make them leach far more: **heat** and **time**.

WHY IT MATTERS

Many of these compounds are *endocrine disruptors* — they mimic or block your natural hormones. The research is strongest exactly where you'd least want it: heating food in plastic, and acidic or fatty foods stored in it, draw the most out. It's not about one exposure; it's the daily drip, year after year.

The swaps that matter

INSTEAD OF...

REACH FOR...

Microwaving in plastic tubs

→ Glass containers, or a plate over a bowl — never heat food in plastic

Plastic water bottles

→ A stainless steel or glass bottle you refill — especially never one left in a hot car

Cling film over food

→ Beeswax wraps, glass lids, or a plate on top

Plastic food storage tubs

→ Glass jars & containers — they don't stain, smell or leach

Plastic chopping boards

→ Wooden boards — every knife stroke on plastic sheds microplastics straight into your food; wood is naturally antibacterial

Aluminium foil (on hot or acidic food)

→ Glass lids, a baking dish with a lid, or unbleached parchment — aluminium leaches into tomatoes, citrus & salty food, especially when hot

Black plastic utensils

→ Wood, bamboo or stainless steel

You can do this in an afternoon. Pull out every plastic container and chopping board, and replace them with a few good glass containers and a couple of wooden boards — it's a modest shop, not a years-long project. At the very least, stop the heat-and-plastic combination today. Old jam jars are free and perfect for storage.

Cookware

The pan you use every day matters more than the one you use twice a year. Non-stick coatings are the main concern: when scratched or overheated, they can release compounds into your food and fumes into the air.

WHY IT MATTERS

Traditional non-stick is made with synthetic chemicals (the “forever chemicals” or PFAS family) that persist in the body and environment. A scratched non-stick pan on high heat is the worst case. The good news: the alternatives are nicer to cook with anyway, and last for generations.

The swaps that matter

INSTEAD OF...

REACH FOR...

Scratched non-stick pans

→ Cast iron — naturally non-stick once seasoned, and it lasts a lifetime (you met it in *Steady*)

Non-stick for searing & roasting

→ Stainless steel — brilliant, durable, nothing to leach

Coated bakeware

→ Glass, ceramic or stainless steel; line with unbleached parchment

Plastic or coated kettles

→ A glass or stainless steel kettle

There’s no “safe way” to keep a non-stick pan — once you know, you simply replace it. A well-loved cast-iron pan may be the last pan you ever buy.

THE QUESTION TO ASK WHEN YOU EAT OUT

Here’s what almost no one considers: you can order the “healthy” option — the grilled fish, the chicken, the steak — and still have it cooked on scratched non-stick or in rancid seed oil. The food is only as clean as the pan it touched and the fat it was cooked in. You can’t control a restaurant kitchen, but you can start *noticing*, choosing places that cook simply, and asking what they use. Once you see it, you can’t unsee it.

Your water

You drink and cook with it every day, which makes it one of the highest-leverage things to get right. Tap water is treated to be safe from germs — a genuine triumph — but “safe from germs” isn’t the same as “nothing else in it.”

WHY IT MATTERS

Depending on where you live, tap water can carry chlorine and its by-products, traces of heavy metals like lead from old pipes, agricultural run-off, and increasingly micro-plastics. None at dramatic levels — but again, it’s the daily, lifelong drip that a low-tox life seeks to soften.

Finding the right filter

A simple jug filter

→ Better than nothing, easy and cheap — reduces chlorine & taste. A fine first step.

An under-sink carbon filter

→ A bigger step up — filters more, plumbed into the tap you already use.

Reverse osmosis

→ The most thorough — removes the most. Best paired with a pinch of good mineral salt to remineralise.

A NOTE ON STORAGE

However you filter, store it in **glass**, not plastic — otherwise you filter the water only to let it sit absorbing plastic again. A large glass dispenser on the counter makes filtered water the easy default for the whole family.



SECTION TWO

Cooking Oils

The everyday swap hiding in plain sight – what you fry, roast and dress your food with.

Rethinking the oils

Few low-tox swaps touch your body as often as this one – the fat you cook in goes into nearly every meal. And the modern kitchen is full of industrial **seed and vegetable oils**: sunflower, canola (rapeseed), corn, soybean, “vegetable” and most generic blends.

WHY IT MATTERS

These oils are extracted from seeds under high heat, pressure and industrial solvents, then bleached and deodorised – a far cry from pressing an olive. They’re packed with fragile omega-6 fats that *oxidise* (turn rancid) the moment they meet heat, light or air, and especially when reheated. Those oxidised oils are a leading driver of **inflammation and oxidative stress** in the body – and chronic oxidative stress is itself one of the recognised roots of disease, cancer among them. This isn’t a small swap.

The swaps that matter

INSTEAD OF...

REACH FOR...

Sunflower, canola, corn, soybean & “vegetable” oil

→ Extra-virgin olive oil for low & medium heat and dressing

Margarine & “buttery” spreads – the very worst, sold as “heart-healthy”

→ Real grass-fed butter or ghee – stable, nourishing, exactly what your body knows

Oils for high-heat frying

→ Ghee, coconut oil, tallow or avocado oil – stable at heat

Shop dressings & mayo (seed-oil based)

→ Make your own with olive oil, lemon & herbs – minutes, no additives

THE SIMPLE RULE

Favour fats that have been part of human kitchens for centuries – pressed, churned or rendered – over those that need a factory to exist. If your grandmother wouldn’t recognise how it was made, let it go. Olive oil, butter, ghee, coconut: simple, ancient, real.

The alternatives are out there

Once you start looking, you'll be delighted by what you find. Right here in Cape Town we've discovered a handful of burger spots cooking entirely in **beef tallow** — yes, golden, crispy fries cooked in rich, nourishing tallow instead of being deep-fried in rancid seed oil. They taste extraordinary, and you walk out feeling fed rather than heavy.

So do a little research where you live — ask your local places what they fry in, and you may be pleasantly surprised. A growing number of restaurants are quietly going back to traditional fats, and they're proud to tell you. Reward the ones that do.

AND IF YOU CAN'T FIND THEM? MAKE YOUR OWN

The best fries you'll ever eat are embarrassingly simple. Cut organic potatoes into long strips, toss generously in melted **beef tallow** (or coconut oil) and good **sea salt**, spread on a tray, and bake hot until golden and crisp. No factory oil, no additives — just real potato, real fat, real salt. Crispy, glorious, and genuinely good for you.

And a little trick I love when I eat out: ask them to cook your meal in **butter** rather than oil. If it's easier, simply say you're *allergic to oils* — most kitchens will happily reach for butter instead, no questions asked. A tiny request that quietly upgrades almost any restaurant meal.

This is the heart of the whole oils story: you give up nothing you love. You simply make it — or find it — the way it was always meant to be made.



SECTION THREE

Reading Labels

*Your single most powerful low-tox skill –
learning to see where the chemicals hide.*

Where the chemicals hide

This is the skill that powers all the others. You don't need a chemistry degree — just a few simple instincts that, once learned, quietly transform what ends up in your trolley.

- **The shorter, the better**

A long ingredient list is the first red flag. Real food has few ingredients, and you can pronounce them all. A loaf of bread needs flour, water, salt and yeast — not twenty syllables of additives.

- **Read the order**

Ingredients are listed by weight, most first. If sugar (under any of its names) or a refined oil sits near the top, you know what you're really buying.

- **Beware the disguises**

Sugar wears many masks: glucose-fructose syrup, maltodextrin, dextrose, “-ose” words, fruit-juice concentrate. “Fragrance” or “parfum” on any product can legally hide dozens of undisclosed chemicals.

- **If you can't picture it, question it**

Can you imagine the ingredient growing, grazing or being simply made? If not — if it reads like a code — treat it as a flag to look closer, not an automatic no, but a pause.

A GENTLE REFRAME

The aim isn't fear at the supermarket — it's literacy. Most of what crowds a label is there to extend shelf life and cut cost for the maker, not to nourish you. Reading is simply how you take that choice back into your own hands.

A little label decoder

The names that hide the most. Learn to spot these, and you'll know in seconds whether something deserves a place in your kitchen.

E-numbers – *the coded additives*

A European code for additives – colourings, preservatives, emulsifiers, sweeteners. A few are harmless (E300 is just vitamin C), but most exist to make cheap, old or lifeless food look and last better. A long string of E-numbers is a clear signal: this is an engineered product, not food. Put it back.

Artificial colourings – *e.g. E102, E110, E129*

Synthetic petroleum-derived dyes that make food unnaturally bright – sweets, fizzy drinks, cereals. Several are linked to hyperactivity in children and legally *must* carry a warning to that effect. There is no reason to eat them. Avoid. Real food is coloured by beetroot, turmeric and paprika.

Preservatives – *nitrites, sulphites, benzoates*

The ones worth cutting out: nitrites (E249–252) in processed meats, linked to harmful compounds when cooked hot; sulphites (E220–228) in cheap wine and dried fruit; benzoates (E210–213) in soft drinks. Choose fresh, and skip the heavily preserved versions.

Hidden sugars – *the many aliases*

Glucose-fructose (high-fructose corn) syrup, maltodextrin, dextrose, sucrose, anything ending “-ose,” juice concentrates. Manufacturers split sugar across several names so none appears first on the list – a deliberate trick. Spot them, and you'll see how much sugar is truly there.

“Natural flavourings” & MSG – *the vague ones*

“Flavourings” is a legal blanket for lab-made blends a company need not disclose. MSG hides under “yeast extract” and “hydrolysed protein.” These exist to make processed food irresistible so you eat more of it. That alone is reason enough to walk past.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You don't have to memorise codes. The instinct is simple: if a label reads like a chemistry set, it isn't food – it's a product engineered to be cheap, long-lasting and addictive. Buy things with short lists of ingredients you recognise, and most of this disappears on its own.



SECTION FOUR

Body & Beauty

*Your skin drinks what you put on it – so the
bathroom shelf deserves the same gentle eye.*

The bathroom shelf

Your skin is not a barrier so much as a sponge. A great deal of what you put on it passes straight through into your bloodstream — and unlike food, it bypasses the liver's first line of defence entirely. The average woman applies a dozen or more products before she leaves the house, each a cocktail of ingredients, every single day for life.

That's hundreds of synthetic compounds absorbed year after year, from products we trust precisely because they're sold for our health and beauty. The bathroom shelf is one of the most overlooked sources of daily chemical load — and one of the most satisfying to clear, because the honest answer isn't a cupboard of "cleaner" alternatives. It's far less, made simply.

You don't need cleaner products. You need almost none.

Before the swaps and recipes, it's worth understanding *why* this matters so much — especially for women. Turn the page.

What the beauty industry isn't telling you

We need to talk about this, woman to woman. We've been sold a version of "beauty" that comes in dozens of bottles — and we were never told what's actually in them, or what it's doing to us. I think it's time we knew.

Your hormones run almost everything — your cycle, your mood, your energy, your fertility, your sleep — and they do it on tiny, precise amounts. They're sensitive by design. So it matters enormously that many everyday cosmetics contain **endocrine disruptors**: synthetic chemicals close enough in shape to your real hormones that your body mistakes them for the real thing. **Parabens** mimic oestrogen. **Phthalates** — hidden under the single word "fragrance" — interfere with how your hormones signal. They're in moisturisers, makeup, perfume, shampoo. And your skin drinks them in, every day, for decades.

THIS IS WHY IT MATTERS SO MUCH FOR WOMEN

So much of what we're told is "just part of being a woman" — the brutal periods, the PMS that steals a week each month, the unexplained trouble conceiving, the thyroid that won't settle — is increasingly being linked to this exact thing: a lifetime of fake oestrogens trickling in from the products we were promised would make us beautiful. We deserve to know that. And these chemicals cross the placenta and reach breast milk, so it's our daughters, too.

I'm not telling you this to scare you. I'm telling you because no one told *me*, and I wish they had. This is the part that lit a fire in me — the realisation that real beauty was never going to come from the very things quietly working against my body. It comes from knowing better, and choosing better. That's the whole reason for the pages that follow.

The ones to recognise on a label: *parabens* (methyl-, propyl-, butyl-), *phthalates* (or anything listing "fragrance/parfum"), *oxybenzone*, *triclosan*, and *BHA/BHT*.

A word on nail polish

Conventional nail polish deserves its own warning, because it's one of the most concentrated chemical cocktails we apply to ourselves — and then wear, sealed onto the body, for weeks at a time. The industry even has a grim nickname for its worst ingredients: the “**toxic trio**.”

WHAT'S REALLY IN IT

Formaldehyde — a known carcinogen, used as a hardener. **Toluene** — a solvent linked to nervous-system harm and, in pregnancy, to developmental effects. **Phthalates (DBP)** — the endocrine disruptors we just met, added for flexibility. Many polishes add formaldehyde resin, camphor and more. That sharp salon smell is the chemicals evaporating — straight into your lungs.

The nail is not the inert shield we imagine; it's porous, and what sits on it has a route in. For something purely decorative, it's a remarkably heavy load to carry — and one of the easiest of all to lighten, because good alternatives now exist.

The swaps that matter

INSTEAD OF...

REACH FOR...

Conventional polish & removers
(acetone)

→ “10-free” or water-based polishes, and acetone-free remover — or bare, buffed nails

Gel & acrylic manicures

→ Skip the UV lamps and harsh removal; let nails breathe and strengthen

Polish during pregnancy

→ Especially worth pausing then — or choosing the cleanest formulas only

Look for the “**10-free**” label — it means the brand has left out the ten most concerning ingredients. Better still, the most beautiful nails are simply healthy ones: well-fed, buffed to a natural shine, free to breathe.

THE ONE NOBODY WANTS TO GIVE UP

Perfume — and a better way to smell beautiful

This is the swap women resist most, and I understand why — a signature scent feels like part of who we are. I'd never ask you to give that up. But you deserve to know what's in that beautiful bottle: that single word “**fragrance**” (or “parfum”) can legally hide *dozens* of undisclosed chemicals — commonly the very **phthalates** we just met, the hormone-disruptors, sprayed straight onto the warm pulse points where your skin absorbs fastest.

THE LOOPHOLE THAT HIDES IT ALL

Fragrance formulas are protected as “trade secrets,” so companies never have to list what's inside. You could be wearing twenty synthetic chemicals and never know it — reapplying them to your neck and wrists all day, for life. It's one of the single biggest hidden exposures most women carry.

But here's the joyful part: you don't have to choose between a scent you love and your health. You can have both — and make it yourself.

THE BIG MIDDLE FINGER TO THE PERFUME INDUSTRY

Buy a little **glass roller bottle**, top it with a carrier oil (jojoba or fractionated coconut), and add pure **essential oils** — the genuinely pure kind from a trusted brand like dōTERRA or Young Living, never the cheap “fragrance oils” that are synthetic all over again. Instead of harming ourselves with their bottles, we make our own — and unlike anything on a perfume counter, ours are actually *good* for us. Turn the page and let's blend.

Three rollers to fall in love with

For each: add the drops to a 10ml glass roller, then top up with jojoba or fractionated coconut oil. These are proper perfume strength — a roller of just a few drops smells of nothing, so we go bold. Roll over your neck, behind the ears and on your wrists, and refresh through the day. **These three are only a starting point** — once you feel how it works, invent your own; that's the real joy of it.

Mystic · warm, sacred, grounding

20 drops frankincense · 15 drops vanilla · 12 drops sandalwood · 8 drops myrrh. *Frankincense calms the mind and supports skin and immunity; vanilla soothes and lifts the mood.*

Earth · woody, deep, steadying

18 drops cedarwood · 14 drops vetiver · 12 drops bergamot · 8 drops patchouli. *Cedarwood and vetiver are deeply grounding and calm the nervous system; bergamot gently lifts.*

Bloom · soft, floral, radiant

16 drops geranium · 14 drops ylang-ylang · 12 drops jasmine · 10 drops sweet orange. *Geranium helps balance hormones and mood; jasmine is uplifting and sensual, easing low spirits; ylang-ylang eases tension and stress.*

NOW MAKE IT YOURS

Treat these as training wheels, not rules. Love citrus? Build around bergamot, orange and a little lime. Crave something spicy? Reach for cinnamon, clove and cardamom. Adjust the drops stronger or softer until it's unmistakably *you*. There's no wrong blend — only the one you fall in love with.

Make a few, need nothing else

Here is the part the beauty industry would rather you never discovered: you can replace almost your entire bathroom shelf with a handful of things you make yourself, for a few pounds, in your own kitchen.

Even the “clean” and “natural” brands are still products – bottled, shelf-stable, and therefore still full of preservatives and emulsifiers, sold to you at a markup. The answer isn't to swap one shelf of bottles for another. It's to step off the shelf entirely.

EVERYTHING YOUR SKIN ACTUALLY NEEDS

To **clean** gently, to **exfoliate** now and then, to **draw out** what's deep, to **tone**, and to **nourish**. That's all. No creams, no lotions, no serums in plastic, no ten-step routine. A few simple preparations and one good oil do the lot – and your skin, freed from being stripped and re-coated all day, learns to balance itself again.

HOW TO KEEP THEM

Because these are real and alive – no preservatives – they live in the **fridge** and last a few weeks, like food. Make small batches. The cool of the fridge feels glorious on the skin, too. This is the whole secret: not a hundred alternatives to buy, but three or four things to make, fresh, again and again.

The daily two

The everyday ritual: a gentle cleanser to wash with, and a toner to refresh and rebalance after.

Honey & oat cleanser

Gentle enough for every day – honey cleans and calms, oats soften, and it never strips the skin the way foaming washes do.

MIX 2 tbsp raw honey · 1 tbsp finely ground oats · a splash of warm water to loosen. Optional: a drop of jojoba or rosehip oil.

USE Massage gently onto damp skin, rinse with warm water. Keep in a small glass jar in the fridge, up to 2 weeks.

Rose & witch hazel toner

Sweeps away the last traces, tightens pores and rebalances the skin – rose hydrates and soothes, witch hazel gently tones.

MIX 3 tbsp rose water · 1 tbsp witch hazel. Optional: 1 drop frankincense essential oil.

USE Decant into a small glass spray bottle. Mist onto clean skin morning and night, or swipe with a cotton pad. Fridge, up to 3–4 weeks.

THE ONE THING TO BUY

Keep a single good oil for nourishing afterwards – **rosehip** (brightening, regenerating) or a **tallow balm** (deeply restoring, remarkably skin-like). A few drops on damp skin is all a face needs. No creams, no lotions, ever.

Two scrubs

Once or twice a week – one to draw out and invigorate, one to feed and soften. Both for body and (gently) face.

Coffee scrub · deep detox & exfoliation

Coffee grounds slough away dead skin and their caffeine stimulates circulation, helping to firm and brighten – a true deep, invigorating exfoliation. (A lovely use for spent grounds.)

MIX 4 tbsp used coffee grounds · 2 tbsp coconut oil (melted) · 1 tbsp coconut sugar.

USE In the shower, massage in circles, focusing on rough or sluggish areas, then rinse. Once or twice weekly. Fridge, up to 2–3 weeks.

Orange, ginger & honey scrub · deep nourishment

A warming, feeding scrub – sugar exfoliates, honey nourishes and softens, ginger warms and stimulates, orange brightens and lifts the spirit.

MIX 4 tbsp sugar (or coconut sugar) · 2 tbsp raw honey · 1 tbsp olive or coconut oil · zest of ½ orange · 1 tsp freshly grated ginger.

USE Massage gently onto damp skin, leave a minute to feed, then rinse. Once weekly. Fridge, up to 2 weeks.

Mask & serum

The deeper care: a clay mask to draw out impurities, and a simple living serum to nourish and protect.

Clay drawing mask

Clay is the great detoxifier of the skin — it binds and lifts away impurities, excess oil and build-up, leaving skin clear and soft. Bentonite or kaolin both work beautifully.

MIX 1 tbsp bentonite or kaolin clay · enough rose water (or plain water) to make a smooth paste. Optional: ½ tsp raw honey. Use a non-metal spoon & bowl.

USE Spread over clean skin, leave 10–15 minutes (until just dry, not cracking), rinse. Once weekly. Best mixed fresh each time.

Aloe & vitamin E serum

A light, living serum — aloe soothes, hydrates and heals; vitamin E protects and helps it keep. All the nourishment of a bottled serum, alive and without the preservatives.

MIX 3 tbsp pure aloe vera gel · the contents of 1–2 vitamin E capsules (or ½ tsp vitamin E oil). Optional: 2 drops rosehip oil.

USE Smooth a little onto clean, damp skin morning or night. Keep in a small glass jar in the fridge, up to 2 weeks.

Flax & rosemary gel

If you make only one thing from this guide, perhaps make this. From a spoonful of flax seeds and a sprig of rosemary — pennies — you get a silky natural gel that nourishes hair and skin alike. I use it on my hair three times a week, and spread the same gel over my face for at least twenty minutes while it works.

MAKE Simmer 3 tbsp whole flax seeds in 2 cups water with a branch of crushed rosemary for about 5 minutes, stirring, until it turns glossy and gel-like.

STRAIN Pour through a sieve while warm (it thickens as it cools) to catch the seeds and rosemary. You're left with a clear, light gel.

USE Smooth through damp hair as a leave-in or rinse-out mask, 2-3 times a week — and spread over a clean face for 20+ minutes, then rinse. Fridge, up to 1-2 weeks.

Why it works

FOR HAIR Flax is rich in omega-3s and forms a natural gel that defines curls, tames frizz and adds shine without a single synthetic. Rosemary is the legendary hair herb — it stimulates the scalp and circulation to the follicles, long used to encourage thicker, stronger growth and slow thinning.

FOR SKIN The same gel is gently firming and hydrating — flax's omega-3s and the plant's natural mucilage soothe, soften and lightly tighten the skin, while rosemary's antioxidants protect. A 20-minute mask that leaves the face calm, plump and glowing.

THAT'S THE WHOLE SHELF

Cleanser, toner, two scrubs, a mask, a serum, this one gel for hair and face — and a single good oil. Made fresh, kept cold, for a fraction of the cost and none of the load. You will not miss the rest.



SECTION FIVE

Home & Cleaning

*The air you breathe indoors, and what you wipe
your surfaces with – gently simplified.*

The cleaning cupboard & the air

We seal ourselves into our homes and then fill the air with sprays, synthetic scents and smoke — and indoor air is often more burdened than the air outside. The happy news: this is one of the cheapest, simplest sections to put right.

WHY IT MATTERS

Many conventional cleaners and air “fresheners” release *volatile organic compounds* (VOCs) and hide that catch-all “fragrance” again. Plug-ins and paraffin candles quietly add to the load in a closed room. You breathe this air all night — so simplifying it pays off while you sleep.

The swaps that matter

INSTEAD OF...

REACH FOR...

A cupboard of specialist sprays

→ Vinegar, bicarb & castile soap clean almost everything

Plug-ins & air fresheners

→ Open windows, simmer citrus & herbs, or a beeswax candle

Paraffin / synthetic candles

→ Beeswax or coconut candles with cotton wicks

Heavily fragranced laundry products

→ Fragrance-free detergent; wool dryer balls over dryer sheets

Antibacterial everything

→ Simple soap & water — a home needs friendly microbes too

THE FREE SWAP THAT MATTERS MOST

Open your windows every day, even in winter, even for ten minutes. Throwing the windows open is the oldest, simplest air purifier there is — and it costs nothing. Add a few houseplants and you’ve a home that breathes.

What you wear all day

This one's a step further, and I'll be honest – it costs more, and you can't exactly throw out your whole wardrobe and go about naked. So this is the one to do **gradually**, as your budget allows. But it's worth knowing, because almost no one talks about it.

Polyester, nylon, acrylic, elastane – the fabrics most of our clothes are now made from – are, quite simply, **plastic**. Worn against warm skin all day, especially when you sweat, they shed microplastics and release chemical residues that your skin can absorb, some of which find their way into the bloodstream. We've cleaned up the kitchen and the bathroom shelf, then wrapped ourselves head to toe in the very thing we just removed.

START WITH WHAT'S TIGHTEST TO THE SKIN

You don't replace it all at once – you replace it *smartly*. Prioritise what sits closest and tightest against the body, warm and often damp with sweat, because that's where absorption is greatest: **underwear, bras, leggings, yoga pants and workout gear**. These touch you most intimately and for the longest hours – swap these first, and you've made the biggest difference for the least money.

The swaps that matter

INSTEAD OF...

REACH FOR...

Polyester / nylon underwear & bras

→

Organic cotton, bamboo or silk – the very first thing to change

Synthetic leggings & workout gear

→

Natural-fibre activewear, or simply cotton for gentler movement

Polyester everyday clothes

→

Cotton, linen, wool, hemp – replace gradually as things wear out

Check the little label inside before you buy: look for **cotton, linen, wool, silk, hemp** – and as a bonus, natural fibres breathe, so you'll feel fresher and sweat less anyway. Buy less, buy better, and let your skin wear something that was once alive.

The morning I knew something was wrong

At twenty-eight, I woke up tired. Not just sleepy — foggy, scattered, unable to focus or hold the simplest list of tasks in my head. I'd lose my thread mid-sentence. And one morning I stopped and thought: *this cannot be normal. Not at twenty-eight.*

So I did something that changed my life. I went to a functional medicine practitioner and spent real money on the full work-up — stool analysis, saliva hormone testing, the lot. I wanted the truth, whatever it cost. And the truth was staggering: my body was carrying a build-up of **microplastics** and various **petroleum-derived chemicals** — the exact compounds found in nail polish and perfume. The very things I'd been putting on myself every single day, in the name of looking and smelling beautiful, were quietly poisoning me.

My exhaustion wasn't a personality. It was a chemical load my body could no longer carry.

I didn't wait. That weekend I threw it all out. I took cleansing, blood-purifying herbs to help my body clear what had accumulated. And within **two weeks** — two weeks — every symptom was gone. The fog lifted. The energy came roaring back. I felt clear, inspired, alive in a way I'd forgotten was even possible.

And here is the part that still moves me to tears: four months later, I was pregnant with my daughter. I think about that timing constantly. Because I cleared my body when I did, her first home — my womb — was a pure, thriving environment, not a toxic chamber. That is a gift I gave her before she ever drew breath, and I will be grateful for it for the rest of my life.

So this is my plea to you, woman to woman: either go and get the deep testing done and see for yourself — or simply throw the stuff out anyway, now, before your system breaks down to make you listen. You do not have to hit the wall I hit. You can choose clarity today.

I did it in a weekend

Let me tell you how I actually did it — because it wasn't slow, and it wasn't over years. I took one weekend, went through my whole house, and got rid of every plastic container, synthetic product and needless chemical I could find. Not frantic. Not fearful. Just clear — and, honestly, joyful.

People imagine low-tox living has to be a slow, expensive, years-long project. It doesn't. You don't need to wait for plastic tubs to “wear out” — that's just a story we tell ourselves to avoid the decision. Throwing out the plastic food containers and chopping boards and replacing them with three good glass containers and two wooden boards is not hard. It's an afternoon and a modest shop. The hardest part is simply deciding to.

So I decided. The plastic tubs, the scratched non-stick, the cling film, the cleaning cupboard full of sprays, the bathroom shelf of fragranced bottles, the synthetic candles — out, in one clarifying sweep. In came glass jars and containers, a cast-iron pan, a water filter, real oils, a few simple oils for my skin, vinegar and bicarb for cleaning. The relief was immediate — in my home and in my head.

It never felt like sacrifice. It felt like coming home to something simpler — and lighter the moment it was done.

I'm not telling you to bin everything by Sunday night if that's not where you are. Start with one swap if one swap is what feels right. But understand what slow really costs: every month you wait is another month of the symptoms, the load, the slow wearing-down. A clear decision isn't harsh — it's the fastest path back to health. If you have the clarity to do it in a weekend, do it in a weekend, with joy. Your body has always known what to do with the load. Our job is simply to stop adding to it.

— Laura

You can't live in a vacuum

Here's what I won't pretend: no matter how beautifully you clean up your home, you cannot escape every exposure. We don't live in a bubble.

The air itself carries a load none of us chose. Exhaust fumes and heavy metals from traffic, industrial pollution, residues drifting on the wind, and whatever else is being released into our skies — we breathe it whether we like it or not. You can filter your water and bin your plastic, but you still have to breathe the world you live in.

So the goal was never zero. The goal is to lighten the load you can control — and actively support your body to clear the rest.

This is the other half of low-tox living, and the half most people miss. Reducing what comes in is only one side; the other is helping your body's own detox organs — above all your **liver** — do their work, so the unavoidable load doesn't simply accumulate the way mine once did.

WHAT I DO, AND RECOMMEND

For genuine, thriving health, I do **3–4 coffee enemas a week**. It's the single most powerful thing I've found for supporting the liver, encouraging the body to release what it's holding, and leaving me with clear-headed energy and resilience. This is the very reason **Better Out Co.** exists — and why I'm so particular that the coffee be genuinely **mould-free**, since mouldy coffee only adds to the load you're trying to lighten.

Coffee enemas are a personal wellness practice with a long history; they're not a substitute for medical care. If you're pregnant, unwell, or have any bowel, heart or electrolyte condition, please check with your practitioner before beginning.



ONE LAST THING

At your own pace

There's no single right pace. If one swap is where you are, begin there and let it become normal before the next. But if you have the clarity to clear a drawer, a cupboard, a whole house in a weekend — do exactly that, and enjoy it.

Remember: a slow path means living longer with the symptoms; a clear decision is a path straight toward health.

Either way, be honest with yourself and kind to your body. Every choice to let less in is a real gift to the system that carries you — and it has always known exactly what to do with a little more room to breathe.

With care,

Laura

FOUNDER, BETTER OUT CO.

This guide is for general education and gentle encouragement only, and isn't medical advice. It reflects a precautionary, "reduce what you can" philosophy; the science on low-level chemical exposure is still developing, and approved products are considered safe by regulators at typical levels of use. The intent here is not alarm but simple, sensible choices. For concerns about your water, your health, or a specific condition, please consult the appropriate professional.