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## STEP TWO

## EAT TO BEAT IT

Nutrition is also part of the cellulite fight. While there's no one magic food that dissolves the orange peel, you can alter your diet so it contains specific foods that reduce the size of the fat boxes, or that prevent further damage to the skin around them.

'The most obvious way to do this is to cut down on calories, fat and sugar,' says nutritionist Anita Bean, co-author of *Eat To Beat Cellulite* (Virgin Books, £12.99). 'But it's also true that some foods can strengthen collagen, which stops skin sagging, and other foods fight fluid retention.' Therefore, over the next six weeks you should be aiming to add as many of these helpful foods to your diet as possible, as well as watching calories overall. But a word of warning: don't aim for size-zero proportions. In a recent trial published in the journal

*Plastic And Reconstructive Surgery*, losing weight dramatically improved cellulite in women with a high body mass index (BMI), but in those with a normal or low BMI, it actually made it worse

—possibly because the loss of weight caused changes in the skin covering the dimples.

## The top five foods to avoid

- 1 **Saturated fats** Found in fatty meat, cheese and butter, they're simply packed with calories.
- 2 **Sugar** Triggers weight gain, but also depletes collagen levels.
- 3 **Trans fats** Found in processed foods, these have the effect of blocking the insulin receptors on cell membranes, interfering with fat metabolism.
- 4 **Salt** Nothing will lead to fluid retention faster than a high-salt diet.
- 5 **Alcohol** More than one drink triggers fluid retention.



## The top ten cellulite fighters

Aim to eat at least three of the foods listed below every day. Fill the rest of your diet with plenty of other fruit and vegetables, healthy proteins, including low-fat dairy, fish, poultry and lean red meat, and wholegrain carbohydrates such as brown rice or granary bread.

- 1 **Goji berries** The dermatologist Howard Murad calls these 'skin-protecting dried berries 'cellulite assassins'. They can help to guard against sun damage, too.
- 2 **Blue, black and red fruit** Blueberries, blackberries, cherries and other red fruit are packed with antioxidants, says cellulite expert Dr Elisabeth Dancy (www.elisabethdancy.co.uk): 'Antioxidants neutralise the free radicals that contribute to the toughening of skin fibres.'
- 3 **Oily fish** 'The healthy omega-3 fatty acids in oily fish boost circulation and strengthen skin,' says Bean.
- 4 **Broccoli** This contains an ingredient called alpha-lipoic acid that, according to dermatologist Nicholas Perricone, prevents the hardening of collagen that can contribute to cellulite.
- 5 **Seaweeds**, such as nori and kombu. 'High in iodine, these raise metabolism, which helps to promote fat loss,' says nutritionist Christina Barton (www.chrisbar.com). But take only on medical advice if you have diabetes or high blood pressure.
- 6 **Pineapple and papaya** 'Enzymes in these fruits help dissolve the proteins that build up around skin fibres,' says Dr Dancy.
- 7 **Dark chocolate** 'Cocoa helps improve skin firmness,' says cellulite specialist Georgios Tzenichristos (call 0800 0758142). Try Lindt Excellence 85% Cocoa, which is low in sugar.
- 8 **Eggs** 'They're rich in lecithin, which is known for its ability to repair skin tissues,' say Cherry Maslen and Linda Bird in their book *Cellulite Solutions* (Infinite Ideas, £12.99).
- 9 **Water** 'The more of this you put in your system, the less of it you retain,' says cosmetic surgeon Dr Lucy Glancey. You should be drinking at least eight glasses a day.
- 10 **Mangoes and carrots** 'These contain betacarotene, which boosts skin elasticity,' says Bean. →

([www.findershealth.com](http://www.findershealth.com)). 'The mineral count of normal sea salt is about 3%; in a Dead Sea salt it's 30%,' she says.

**7 Lift and roll** Georgios Tzenichristos says this self-treatment method helps break down fat and release fluid from the fat boxes. To do it, lift about half an inch of skin right on the surface of your thigh – any deeper and you'll grab muscle, not fat. Now, roll this quite firmly through your fingers. Repeat over as much of your legs as possible. Start slowly to avoid bruising and gradually build up to ten minutes or more daily.

**8 Take a coffee bath** 'This is an emergency quick fix to temporarily disguise cellulite,' says Christina Barton. 'The caffeine in the coffee draws excess fluid and toxins from the skin, minimising the dimpling.' Put three to four cafetières full of cool organic coffee into an empty bath and sit in it for 15 to 20 minutes. Rinse thoroughly to get rid of the smell afterwards!

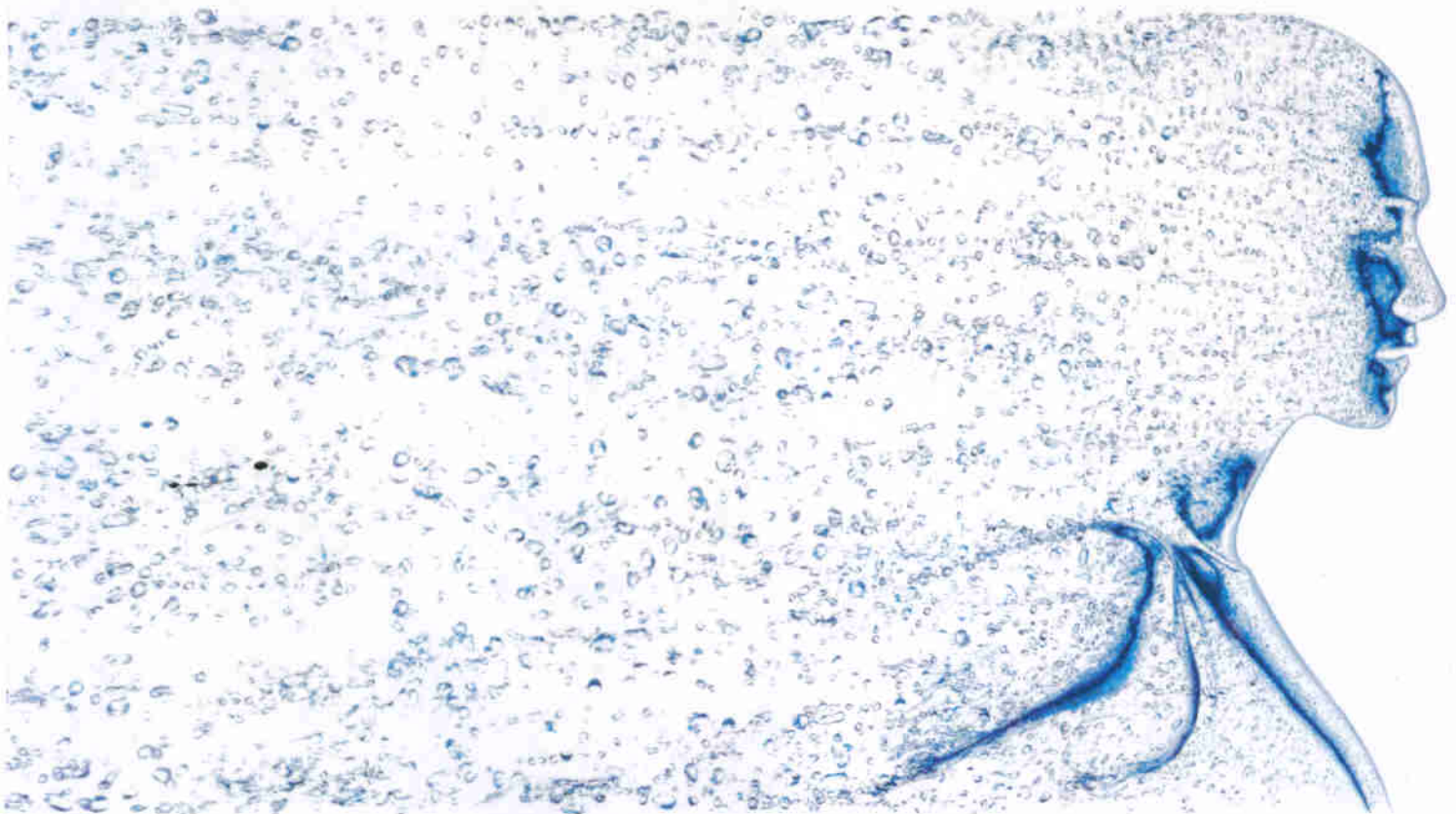
**9 Move your legs** 'If you're sitting still all day, fluid and proteins pool in your legs, and this helps to develop the toughened

fibres that cause bulges,' says Dr Dancey. While you're sitting, do calf raises and ankle rotations, and clench your thigh muscles – and never sit with your legs crossed.

**10 Do the bum shuffle** This exercise can easily be done while you're watching TV and, says beauty therapist Janet Ginnings, helps boost circulation and tone the muscles: 'Sit on the floor and "walk" back and forth on your bottom for as long as you can.'

**11 De-stress** Strange but true – stress could be making your cellulite worse. 'Stress increases cortisol, which weakens blood vessels, leading to poor circulation and fluid retention,' says Tzenichristos. 'It also loosens your skin, making cellulite look worse. Cortisol increases fat stores in the stomach area, too.'

**12 Try DIY hydrotherapy** At the end of your normal shower blast your legs and bottom for 20 seconds with water as hot as you can bear, then follow with a 30-second cold blast. It's a great daily circulation booster! [2]



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