



How a Plant-Based Lifestyle Helped Me Regain My Health and Youthfulness

By Victoria Rose
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For most of my adult life, I battled health and weight issues. Since about 18 years old, I fluctuated in weight and clothing sizes, and it was ever so frustrating. I tried so many things, like long workouts in the gym, weight-loss pills, restricting carbs, and so on. I was doing anything possible to get those fifty pounds off, but the results were always unsatisfying. Each time I lost weight, I ended up gaining back more than I originally lost. I eventually cancelled my useless gym membership and settled for occasional evening strolls.

In suffering from various health maladies, there was always a pill or substance to take. For frequent colds and flus, for example, there was Nyquil. For fatigue, there was coffee. For yeast and urinary tract infections, there was Monistat and antibiotics. PMS horror? No problem, there was Motrin. However, these “solutions” dealt with symptoms and made me feel medicated instead of healthy. I thought the cycle of illness and pills was normal and a part of life – even though I was in my twenties!

One day, I found myself having a deep conversation with a new vegetarian friend. I asked him why he stopped eating meat. He explained in fine detail that he did so for health, environment, and ethical reasons. The lack of compassion toward animals slaughtered for food hit a sore spot for me, especially since I was an animal lover. I also had an epiphany that consuming animal products could be contributing to my years of struggling health.

It was a no brainer: I adopted a vegetarian diet. I started feeling better within a few weeks. The pounds started coming off without much effort. I started hiking, and my energy levels soared. I began experimenting with new ingredients in the kitchen and discovered a wide range of delicious foods! I realized how limiting a meat-centered diet had been for me—basically meal after meal of meat in the middle of my plate, surrounded by a side dish or two.

One day, my long-time boyfriend Jc and I watched the movie *Earthlings*, which is about the human exploitation

of animals. The film inspired us to exclude all animal products from our diets. We focused on wholesome foods like beans, whole grains, and lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. Soon *all* the ailments and excess weight started to disappear! My longstanding acne went away within a few months of dropping dairy. In the three years since I made the change, I haven't experienced one yeast or urinary tract infection, nor felt bloated or even caught the flu.

My improved energy levels led me, again, to increase my fitness routine. I've added calisthenics to my workouts, while my running ability and strength have improved greatly. I've noticed how muscle recovery occurs more rapidly and fitness has become fun. I finally have my health and youth back!

Every single human being should know how it feels to be healthy, confident, and full of energy. I believe the key for making this change is simple: knowledge. Once you have the knowledge, you are empowered to live the life you deserve!