

The Therapeutic Fasting Program
Improved body terrain through toxin elimination.

by Healer J. Mark Taylor, Medical Herbalist

The counter-position of health is, of course, ill-health. Therefore, it stands to reason that if you can improve health then you have, by definition, decreased ill-health. And that is the purpose of a therapeutic fasting program – to dramatically improve health.

Here at Arcady Holistic we offer a flexibly designed therapeutic fasting program to the vast majority of our new clients. This program has resulted in such outstanding success in over-coming ill-health that I thought I would share the construct with other holistic practitioners.

Introduction

We all know that health does not come in a pill or a surgery or even a herb. Health is a general condition of the body. Improving health can be visualized as a slow upward spiral of perceived well-being. Decreasing health, the pre-existing condition of most program entrants, is the perception of an inexorable downward spiral of one's health status. Virtually all of our incoming clients are of the opinion that under current conditions their health status will be grossly less in five years time with the prospect of a miserable old age also looming large in their thoughts.

The purpose of a therapeutic fasting program is to create conditions within the client that they know they have attained improved health, are on an upward spiral where their expectation is of improving health, and have learned enough about toxin elimination to be more in control of their health care. And this a good therapeutic fasting program will do magnificently.

The Theory

Holistic health is multifaceted with a myriad of therapies that could conceivably be incorporated into a health improvement program. The therapeutic fasting program is configured with primary emphasis on two powerful holistic therapies: fasting, and alkali dietary regimen. Lesser emphasis is also placed on the similarly powerful holistic therapies of herbal medicine, sauna therapy, and colon hydrotherapy.

I feel that it is important for me to note that it is not the therapy that does the healing but, instead, how the therapy is used. Herbs in the hands of an Allopath are merely drugs but in the hands of a healer they are health-promoting food for the ill body. It is how the therapy is used that makes it holistic: the application of the tool, so to speak.

The first powerful holistic therapy used is fasting — specifically a juice fast. Again, therapies are multifaceted and fasting is no exception. Fasting will affect the body in a great many ways. For simplicity's sake I'm only going to mention two impressive events: one, it brings the body to ketosis; and two, it helps to empty and relieve stress on the bowel.

For toxin elimination it is important to bring the body into a ketotic state. Think of toxins as coming

in two forms: water soluble and fat soluble.

Water-soluble toxins flow through the body much as ground water flows through the ground. The toxins are transient and soon are eliminated from the body through normal channels of elimination such as the lungs, skin, urine, and bowel. 'Toxin elimination' packages sold through health food stores are typically just elaborately marketed laxatives.

Fasting is an efficient method of reducing pathological toxins being absorbed into the body from a weakened bowel. These pathological toxins are poorly broken down large protein fractions which I call "fractals." They tend to 'stick' in the mucous membranes of eliminative organs and tissues. Certainly most sinusitis, bronchitis, and asthma can be reduced or eliminated in the short term by tending to the bowel thus reducing demands placed upon eliminative organs.

Fat-soluble toxins are the most dangerous toxins imaginable. Unlike transient fractals the fat soluble toxins are lodged within and dissolved within semi-permanent body fat. Fat-soluble toxins are for all intents and purposes permanent. This type of toxin disrupts and distorts internal body mechanisms provoking such illness as behaviourally-symptomed illness, auto-immune disease, and cancer. Removing these toxins will help the body overcome and reverse these diseases.

One sure way to mobilize fat soluble toxins is to bring the body to a state of ketosis. A body is in a productive state of ketosis when ketones can be detected in the urine. Ketones are a by-product of the fat-burning metabolism.

When the body is 'fasted' it soon figures out that ready carbohydrates are no longer available and so it turns to the burning of fats for energy. This turning-to-fats requires quite some physiological change in people not accustomed to fasting for health and the body will resist being made to go through this transition. The resistance can be different for everyone but many people will have their will-power tested through headaches, flu-like symptoms, inability to concentrate, paralysis or tremor, nervousness, etc. Of course there is hunger.

Most people 'flip' over to the burning of fats at the three and a half (3 ½) day point. People doing their own at-home fasts often quit at the three day mark because they have not been educated as to the physiological 'flip' and rationalize their feelings into an excuse to cease their fast.

At the three and a half day point most people 'flip' over to a fat-burning metabolism. When this happens ketones, a by-product of fat burning, will be detected in the urine. Once 'flipped' hunger will disappear as the body is now satiated with copious and voluminous amounts of stored body fat. The flipped body can now fast for weeks or months depending upon the type of fast being performed. Every day that fat is being burned there is a release of toxins into interstitial fluid. *It is very important to drive these toxins out quickly* lest these toxins get reabsorbed back into fat cells.

There is a line of reasoning stating that some people (e.g. the environmentally ill) are too sick to safely cleanse toxins from the body. The release of toxins will provoke a 'healing crisis' which could be life threatening. I disagree with this reasoning entirely. Nobody wants to remain sick and most people want the insidious, debilitating toxins removed so that a normal existence may once again be achieved. Still, the decision is always the client's.

The second significant way that fasting will affect the body is that it helps to both empty and relieve stress on the bowel. A significant portion of clients will have primary bowel issues which are the reason they are seeking out the fasting program in the first place. Through their own research and their intuition clients will know that fasting and colon hydrotherapy will have significant potential in the treatment of their afflictions.

We know that the alimentary canal has some of the highest cell replacement rates in the body so much good can be done when it is allowed to heal completely from mouth through to anus. Cells can be almost entirely replaced in six days. Fasting allows the canal to empty itself significantly. And, colon hydrotherapy really helps to remove more stubborn deposits. For example, we have seen barium removed nine years after the diagnostic barium enema procedure was performed.

Another benefit that comes from emptying and resting the bowel is that the bowel is given a chance to shrink back toward a more normal size. This will help to restore function through better motility as with chronic constipation and, by decreasing the diameter of the bowel, less fractals will seep prematurely through bowel lining. Many fasts and colon hydrotherapy procedures may be required to restore tone and shape to a bowel. Still, for some clients with serious bowel disease, restored function is far superior to the seemingly inevitable prospect of receiving a colostomy bag.

Fasting is like pushing a body's reset button. Almost without exception clients will profess feeling far better at the end of day seven than they did at the beginning of day one. But addressing the acute condition is far different from treating the chronic condition.

In Alternative health we differentiate between acute care and chronic ill-health treatment. The first portion of a therapeutic fasting program is designed to address primarily the immediate, acute health concerns of the client. However, there is a reason clients become ill in the first place and the second portion of a therapeutic fasting program needs to address this issue.

The second powerful holistic therapy used in a therapeutic fasting program is the alkali regimen. The purpose of alkali eating is to place the client on the long upward spiral of health with each year leaving the client feeling better than the last ... growing younger and younger until, pthst!, the client dies suddenly and painlessly "in the saddle" at a ripe old age of 83+.

We are what we eat. When our clients practice an alkali-based therapy their bodies become very, very healthy. Interstitial fluid of a body is approximately pH 7.2. The body maintains itself at this point of dynamic equilibrium. We can make it easy for the body to maintain this equilibrium by eating a net alkali diet, or, we can make it very difficult for the body to maintain this equilibrium by eating an acidic diet. An alkali diet is the spiral upward toward ever improved health. An acid diet is the downward spiral toward ever debilitating illness. Intuitively I'm sure you can picture an acid diet as being provocative of insitu body toxins, and also their direct corrosive nature.¹

Most people entering our therapeutic fasting program are acidic. This means their urine tests as acid (i.e. less than 7.0 pH). In fact, their urine usually tests on my strips as less than or equal to 5.0 pH! The body dumps excess acid out in the urine in order to maintain homeostasis. Also, to counter excess acid and bring body fluid toward pH 7.2, a counter-balancing withdrawal of stored body alkali is necessary, and the greatest store of ready alkali in the body is bone material.

To keep the body really happy one's diet should be, on average, as close to a net 7.2 pH as possible. And that is what we do for our clients by way of the alkali regime.

Our alkali regime is essentially a simple variation of a basic food combining diet. We provide an eating regimen and detailed recipes for a week of food combining during the therapeutic fasting program. From this our clients quickly learn how easy it is to food combine. They learn that it is not at all a diet but is instead a means of making more intelligent eating choices.

We educate our clients to the existence of three food groups: animal product, (cooked) bulk carbohydrates, and fruit & vegetables. The first two are acidic and the last is alkali.

We educate our clients as to proper food group combining:
animal product with fruit & vegetables;
(cooked) bulk carbohydrates with fruit & vegetables;
but never [an acid with an acid]
animal product with (cooked) bulk carbohydrates.

And finally, we educate our clients that the objective is to make each meal a "net alkali" meal by weight. In other words, each meal must have more alkali (fruit & vegetables) weight than acid weight. By doing this the body will eventually become alkali and hence on the upward spiral of improved health.

Funnily, borrowing against future alkali is allowed. No need to be unnecessarily strict. If one meal is known to be acidic (e.g. a steak dinner) then a compensating alkali meal of equal or greater weight must be eaten the next day. Not exactly a healthy habit but allowed on occasion nevertheless.

Of course we stress certified organic where possible. The bulk of our dietary toxins come via our fruit & vegetables with the herbicide, pesticide, anti-moulds, artificial fertilizers, and fumigated storage.² Advise the client as to these fat-soluble toxins accordingly.

Many people test with an alkali of 7.5 pH before even the first week of the therapeutic fasting program is finished. Every client is alkali half way through the second week. At the end of the food combining stage everybody is glowingly ecstatic about how good they feel. The failure rate (unable to complete entire program) is virtually zero as clients quickly realize vastly diminished ill-health.

Not discussed at length here are the powerful holistic therapies of sauna and colon hydrotherapy. In my opinion both are critical adjuncts if one is to achieve stellar results.

As mentioned previously colon hydrotherapy is critical to removing toxic matter from the bowels. It is also instrumental in achieving increased bowel tone and in restoring normalcy to the over-stretched bowel. Less obviously, colon hydrotherapy also helps to reduce infection and overcome fever. [*Think about it. Digestion is an immune system function. Toxic bowel over-occupies the immune system.*] Do not make the mistake of discounting the effectiveness of this therapy.

Sauna therapy is crucial in driving loosened toxins out through the skin. We have built here at Arcady Holistic a special therapeutic sauna made with 'doaty' wood; Nova Scotian poplar. Doaty

wood is moisture absorbing, unlike cedar which is moisture resistant and is used in recreational saunas. A good sauna knocks moisture out of the air: the drier the air, a hotter tolerable temperature, the more the perspiration, hence more toxin elimination.³

Our sauna appointments are two hours long: three rounds of twenty minutes in the sauna and twenty minutes out. Each time out the client sponge bathes the body with certified organic apple cider vinegar and filtered water (1:10) to remove and neutralize toxins. The sauna procedures also act as hot / cold treatments (the in & outs, and the sponge bathing).

Although I have never had to apply oxygen or intubate any client, yet, be prepared to treat varying degrees of heat prostration. Don't make this known to clients as they'll have heart palpitations, 'fer sure. The general rule of thumb is that if a client can walk to the sauna then they can sauna safely. Remember, not too many people have died in their household saunas. We make clients take longer cool downs (i.e. the outs) if their heart rate is above 110 / min after 20 minutes out. Have kelp capsules on hand for the big-time sweaters. As a practitioner you may want to upgrade your skills to advanced first aid or full Emergency Medical Responder (as I have) for personal and client confidence.

In my opinion the fashionable but relatively inexpensive infrared saunas are toxin activating and hence carcinogenic. Infrared radiation is known to provoke cancer. ⁴ Don't buy into this fad. Steam cabinets work but are not efficient compared to a dry sauna. Don't have your clients do the 'niacin' or 'exercise' thing prior to sauna. It is absolutely unnecessary when one has a good sauna. I believe those dubious habits originated with the Church of Scientology's L. Ron Hubbard, but they use a huge tent in the Californian sun as a sauna.⁵

The Program

Our program consists of a seven-day juice fast (with training wheels) followed immediately by seven days of food combining. This introductory program is often enough to overcome ailments people have sought for years to throw off. We emphasize to our clients over and over again that the program is educational in nature and that more serious fasting and more rigorous dietary changes are needed to really overcome chronic ill-health. Our clients having gone through the program and being in intimate contact with us for a period of two weeks truly come to understand responsibility in health care and become empowered to continue their health-improvement journey in control of their own destiny. The more fasts one performs, the easier they become.

Pre-Program (Day -1)

Two client appointments are required before the first week of juice fasting begins. Typically the client schedules these two appointments on the day before the commencement of the fast.

The first appointment is a full one and a half hour assessment with the medical herbalist. At this time there is performed a complete medical history, physical examination, vitals including weight and, of course, the all import first urine test. One deliverable from the medical herbalist as a result of this appointment is 500 ml of "magic" medicine (a combined tincture) particular to the client. The magic medicine is independent of the fast and food combining. It is one of the normal deliverables from a

consultation with a medical herbalist. Perhaps it is the magic medicine that does all of the good and not the fasting or food combining?

The client is informed of the hows & whys of the fast and of what to expect – especially the dreaded 3½ -day ‘flip’ point. The client is also educated as to the purpose and reasoning behind the alkali regimen. It is always humorous to relate to the client that we will be disappointed if, on the third day, they don’t show up at the clinic in pajama bottoms and pillow head – as many do.

The second appointment, often back-to-back with the first, is made with the holistic nutritionist. The holistic nutritionist explains the intricacies of the fast and the subsequent alkali regimen and also provides a booklet containing a detailed diet schedule for the entire two weeks. Many adjustments may have to be made at this point to accommodate the special needs of each client.

Provided to the client at this time are two packages of fenugreek, each 28 gm, and four packages of buchu / juniper / oatstraw (BJO), 9 gms each respectively making four packages of 27 gms. A fenugreek tea is made on the first two evenings of the fast and BJO tea is made on the following four evenings. Each tea should be made to at least 500 ml. The purpose of the fenugreek is to prepare the many and varied mucous membranes of the body for toxin elimination: healing and restoring them. The BJO tea safely drives loosened toxins out of the body.

The client is then sent off to purchase the necessary foods. A juicer is mandatory.

Note: a urine test is done each time the client comes in for an appointment. It is a source of great encouragement to the client to be able to see changes taking place within the urine as a result of actions the client has taken.

Supplementary

I originally learned about both a seven-day fast and a cleansing diet from articles written by Ella Birzneck which were presented through programs delivered by Dominion Herbal College, Burnaby, British Columbia. A great deal has been modified and adapted over the years especially the concept of linking these two powerful holistically-applied therapies together as part of a more comprehensive program.⁶

Pretty much any old fast or cleansing diet will do the job, I’m sure. But be mindful of their constructs.

The fast should be almost entirely liquid in nature so that the bowel has a chance to rest. There is so much bowel-oriented ill-health out there. There is indisputable truth in the expression, “health begins in the bowel.” Juice fasts are very good because they are also nutritious. A heavy emphasis should be placed upon carrot juice because it is a very effective, yet natural, chelating agent. The traditional adding of parsley and celery to the carrot base makes the juice less fun to drink but more effective for purposes of the program.

Intestinal parasites come and go in most us but in many they can hang around and possibly provoke difficulties. Almost as a rule here we discount to clients their parasites. We do this because people

tend to freak at the idea that they may have parasites. Many unscrupulous Alternative-health practitioners use this knowledge to leverage clients into purchasing more services or products. We simply have people do a clove of fresh garlic (the only solid allowed in the early stages of our fasting regime) daily. It works well as an anthelmintic especially in the fasting client.

Very frequently an elated client will wish to extend their fast. Be encouraging of this activity. More is better! We simply advise our clients to keep repeating the fifth day of our juice fast until they decide it is time to continue with our withdrawal days: “day 6” and “day 7.” During their extension we recommend the addition of ½ tsp wheat germ oil (vitamin E) to their daily regimen.

We recommend that fastings be ended slowly and carefully. We allow two days for this task. The whole exercise can be for naught if someone binges in celebration immediately after their fast. Keep the process alkali.

The alkali regime is more a way-of-eating than a diet. Whatever weak dispositions the client may possess by the blessings of nature the alkali regimen will usually compensate and correct. That is why we call it the upward spiral of health. We give people a one-week detailed meal plan and it has proven sufficient for them learn the idea of “food combining.”

There is little need of diets involving rotating food sensitivities, dairy & gluten elimination, “candida”⁷ restrictions, diabetic or glycaemic practices, etc. Life need not be so difficult and complicated. Virtually all clients can participate in some type of therapeutic fasting program, be better for it, and learn a logical, attractive eating regimen. Even severe (“brittle”) diabetics benefit greatly.

The beauty of a therapeutic fasting program is that holistic practitioners can teach it, clients can learn it, and virtually every nature-cure minded person can do it. Chronic illnesses from rheumatoid arthritis through systemic lupus erythematosus, and acute illnesses from influenza through constipation, all benefit greatly. Two weeks is more than enough to show the path and the way, but usually more frequent and / or intense effort is required to overcome a chronic illness. It is too bad we don’t have publicly-funded Cottage Hospitals⁸⁻⁹ or community Alternative Health Clinics¹⁰ set up to assist people in their efforts to restore health in a more natural and effective manner than current Standard-paradigm options provide.

(Footnotes)

1 Refined sugar is an acid. Sugar burns the bowels leading to increased leakage of fractals and subsequent increased likelihood of sinusitis, bronchitis, and asthma.

2 Dr. Jozef Krop, Alive Magazine, issue not remembered.

Dr. Krop has a private practice in Mississauga, ON.

3 Moisture in the sauna creates an illusion of copious perspiration. Moisture simply condenses from the air onto the body. Also, moist heat is not well tolerated so temperature must be lower.

4 Page 968, Davidson’s Principles and Practice of Medicine, 17th ed, Churchill Livingstone

5 Known as a “Purification Rundown.” Running, niacin, megavitamins, followed with four hours in a sauna. Repeat for 30 days. Used as a drug addiction treatment.

We have had people phoning our clinic looking to perform this ritual over a one week period. We no longer accept them.

6 I have long since forgotten what has been changed and what has not. So, special thanks to

Dominion Herbal College.

7 I have been practicing for a very long time indeed and I can count on one hand (maybe two) the number of true candidas, hypoglycaemics, or hypothyroids; however, it seems in a Naturopath's practice nearly everyone has one, some, or all of these.

8 *A New Paradigm in Health Care*, A Report to the Honourable Allan Rock, Minister of Health, prepared by Keith Stelling, MNIMH for The Ontario Herbalists' Association, October 1997

9 *The Nature of Health*, Herbalist Association of Nova Scotia, 1998 submission to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health.

10 *Alternative Health Clinic*, J. M. Taylor, Canadian Journal of Herbalism, 1999 Volume XX No 1