Saunas for Detoxification

An easy, enjoyable, and healthy way to detoxify your body

by Raleigh Duncan, D.C.

The evidence is overwhelming. Toxins are everywhere, in our water, air, food, soaps, shampoos, even in the clothes we wear. It has become commonplace to read about mercury in our fish, jet fuel in our lettuce, heavy metals in our air. Toxins have been directly linked with a host of diseases: cancer, lowered immune function, arthritis, autism, fibromyalgia, alzheimers, neurological and cardiovascular disorders, just to name a few. People living today carry within their bodies a chemical cocktail made up of industrial chemicals, pesticides, food additives, heavy metals, general anaesthetics, and the residues of therapeutic Pharmaceuticals, as well as toxins from alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and illegal drugs. It is a problem that is not going away, at least not in our lifetime. We need to detoxify!

Sherry Rogers MD in her groundbreaking book, Detox or Die, says toxicity is a one-way street leading to disease; the key to healing the impossible is to reverse the toxicity. But what is the best way to detoxify? There are several methods being used today: chelation, where enzyme preparations are injected into the bloodstream, binding toxins as they pass through and are excreted; fasting, with or without herbal and mineral preparations and/or colonics to help to remove toxins; and saunas, removing toxins through sweating.

Whereas the first two methods are suitable for persons with a high degree of dedication and/or discipline, the sauna method is one that can be used easily and effectively by almost everyone. And it can be used in conjunction with the other methods of fasting, colonics, and chelation. Raymond Francis, in his fascinating book, Never be Sick Again, emphatically states, “Not only do saunas feel good, they are good! Saunas get your heart beating and your blood circulating, helping the body to detoxify in unique and important ways.”

Sweating is an ancient tradition and a good method of removing toxins. From the Roman Steam Bath, to the Finnish Savusauna, the Russian Banya, the Native American Sweat Lodge, and the Moroccan Hammam, people have been detoxing and restoring themselves this way throughout history. Today there are many types of sauna and steam available for almost any budget and location, from exotic built-ins to simple portable units. Some use conventional steam, some use heated rocks, and others use efficient infrared heaters. The effectiveness of the detox will depend on the type of heat chosen and the protocol employed. In her book Some like it Hot, Nicola Rajala describes the major difference between the steam room and the conventional sauna. Although the steam room feels hotter because of the high humidity, the body actually has a harder time sweating because of the relatively low temperature (120F). The water on the skin is primarily condensation rather than actual sweat. The conventional “box of hot rocks” sauna is still very common today, but it seems to be losing ground due to the many advantages of infrared saunas such as energy efficiency, comfort in use, deeper penetration of heat, and more substantial detox.

A study analyzing the chemical composition of sweat found that the sweat of participants using the box of hot rocks sauna had 95-97% water, while the sweat of those using an infrared sauna was 80-85% water—the rest being composed of cholesterol, fat-soluble toxins, heavy metals (such as mercury and cadmium), sulfuric acid, ammonia, sodium, and uric acid.

In their book Beyond Antibiotics, Drs. Michael A. Schmidt et al. state the following: “Saunas are being used by some doctors to stimulate the release of toxins from the bodies of their patients. They have found that a lower temperature (105-110 F) sauna taken for a longer duration is most beneficial. These low temperatures stimulate a fat sweat, which eliminates toxins stored in fat, as opposed to the high temperature sauna, which encourages a water sweat.”

There is a growing consensus among healthcare professionals, as well as the general public, that infrared saunas are a safe, effective, and enjoyable way to detoxify the body. Putting a sauna in your home is a great way to prevent disease and promote a healthy, relaxed lifestyle. As with any regimen, always consult with your doctor first. It is important to start out slowly, drink enough water, take a good multi-vitamin and multi-mineral, and to wash off any sweat after the session to prevent toxins from being re-absorbed.

For more information on infrared saunas, call Sauna Works at 800-798-1779 or see their ad on the inside front cover.
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