

FASTING

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO CLEANSING YOURSELF

Fasting is arguably one of the most powerful of all the tools for cleansing the body. And with most of us ingesting an array of preservatives, chemical additives, pesticides, heavy metals, medication and nicotine – even if we don't smoke – as well as accumulating toxic waste products from poorly combined food and from overeating, regular fasting is even more important than ever.



The body has a limited capacity to eliminate this toxic load. It does its best, but we do burden ourselves. When the accumulation starts to interfere with our proper functioning, the body sends out warnings, which means it's time for some serious house cleaning.

SOME OF THE MORE OBVIOUS SIGNS OF TOXICITY

1. Constantly unclear (foggy) head, frequent upset stomach, aches and pains, and menstrual cramps.
2. Chronic constipation and associated tightness the shoulder blades; dizziness; inability to concentrate; uncontrolled temper; black, offensive-smelling poo (a healthy colour is light brown or the colour of the food you've eaten); and offensive body odours.
3. Persistent tiredness, requiring many hours of sleep beyond the usual eight. That feeling when you wake up and feel as though you haven't slept. The more toxic we are, the more sleep we need. The more we eat, the more sleep we need.

4. Sallow, ageing skin; dull or bloodshot eyes, insomnia and that "I'm getting old" feeling.

5. Addiction to sweets, coffee, tobacco and starches. Overeating. No appetite. Eating from habit or "to keep up strength". You have a headache upon waking, or after

missing a meal, which is relieved by eating.

6. Waking in the morning with a stuffy nose; mucus in the throat; acid, bitter or salty taste in the mouth; encrustation on the eyes (more than the usual 'sleep'); wax in the ears.

7. Coated tongue from years of mucus-forming foods. Natural mucus is a clear fluid secreted in the respiratory system, and in the genito-urinary and the intestinal tracts. It moistens the organs and protects them from irritating chemicals. A diet that includes albuminous foods – dairy foods, grains, nuts, meats, fish, eggs – imparts to the various mucus secretions their coloured, sticky, viscous consistency. The blood, lymph nodes and cells become saturated with the excess mucus. The body tries to discharge it through the organs of elimination. For instance, the common cold acts as a safety valve to relieve the bloodstream and the lymphatic system of congestion that can otherwise lead to catarrhal infections, tuberculosis and tumours. Many of us are congested with excess mucus. However, as we eliminate the excess, the digestive and respiratory tracts become more permeable, and the cell walls get back to working properly so more nutrients can reach the inner cells, and eliminating waste will improve. You will naturally eat less, because more of the nutrients will be absorbed.

WHY FAST?

The aim of fasting is to rest the body so the energy that would usually be used for physical activity and for digestion and assimilation of food is freed for cleansing and healing. Fasting is one of the most effective methods of rebuilding the body's own healing capacity and overcoming major ailments.

Obviously, it's best to start fasting before any such disorders develop. A one-day fast each week is good and manageable for most of us.

For me, eating organics is a given, however, if you're contemplating a fast for more than a day, it'd be wise to go organic for a few months before if you aren't already – and keep it up after! There's a good reason for this. The body stores various natural and human-made toxins because it has a limited capacity to excrete and neutralise poisons. This task is made especially difficult because the body also has to eliminate the waste products of everyday metabolism. During fasting, much of the body fat is rapidly used up, suddenly liberating stored poisons.

HOW YOU MIGHT REACT

Reactions during the fast will vary with the individual, depending on your state of wellbeing and how much damage you've accumulated over the years. Possible symptoms: nausea, irritability, headache, fatigue, aching muscles, sleeplessness, and in rare instances, rashes, vomiting and open sores.

Some reactions common to all are a heavily coated tongue, foul breath, loss of weight, periodic irritability and a sense of weakness. These are all signs that nature is performing surgery.

Gas dissolved from cells and excreted into the digestive tract can cause symptoms of toxicity and can be a source of pain and discomfort due to pressure. An enema or zone therapy (foot massage) on areas related to the digestive tract, pituitary gland and neck can help to trigger the release of gas. Aniseed, caraway seed, cloves, sweet fennel, ginger, peppermint or parsley will help to expel gas. Mix ½ teaspoon of the ground herb in one cup of hot water. Steep for five minutes and drink.

The area of congestion in your body will determine the type of eliminative crises you will experience. For example, a congested lymphatic system may be cleansed via boils and open sores. If the reactions become too severe, after the crisis is past, break the fast and repeat it several weeks later.

On a 72-hour fast, the second day is often the most challenging; for longer fasts, say up to a week, the first two to five days are usually the most difficult. It takes perseverance, will power and self-control to overcome habitual eating.

Most people, particularly those new to fasting, will experience some signs of discomfort on the first day of the fast when the body starts its cleansing. Headaches and muscular pains are common, the result of released toxins, which irritate muscles, nerves and tissues. Extra mucus is also common. Toxins from the lungs and cells are mopped up by mucus secreted by mucus membranes and 'packaged up' for release through the bloodstream and the mouth and/or nose. This is especially so for those who are able to fast in a relatively clean environment, which is the ideal.

Generally, if there are any reactions, they are likely to be short-lived, no more than a few hours. Lie down and wait for them to pass. Zone therapy (foot massaging) or a general massage often helps.

That said, cleansing symptoms are usually mild. You're more likely to experience the joys of fasting: a sense of lightness, clear-headedness, wit, joy, love and the absence of digestive strain. No matter how well you feel you should spend most of the time resting.

HOW LONG?

That's up to each individual and it will be determined by your age, what physical condition you're in, your strength, any ailment/s you might have and how troubling they are, the level of toxicity, your previous diet, mental attitude, the weather. If your in a city environment, you'll also need to take into account the level of air pollution, and the demands of your daily work and activities and your family and so forth.

Rest is extremely important to avoid overtaxing the body while it is engaged in the eliminative

process. Sleeplessness and nervousness are signs of severe toxicity. For temporary relief, take an enema and do zone therapy. You will generally achieve sound sleep within five minutes. However, as the fast progresses, you will experience vitality with only a few hours of sleep.

WHERE TO FAST

Ideally, in nature, away from the crowds and other human activities. If you are walking out of a campsite and there's a bit of distance to cover, I've found a little fresh juicy fruit or soaked dried fruit (see RECIPES on the food page) on the Sunday afternoon is enough to get me up and moving and walking out back into 'civilisation'.

I don't recommend fasting in the city, but some people manage it. If you do, choose a weekend. Again, start by skipping Thursday's evening meal. I don't recommend being at work either – take the Friday and Monday off. If you choose to work, the Friday should be tolerable, assuming it's not manual labouring. Don't drive or cycle, as your reaction time is slowed, making you accident-prone. In general, just be mindful about interactions with everyone and everything.

WHAT TO AVOID IF YOU'RE IN THE CITY

Television and radio, for starters, especially the news. If you must read, should not cause over-excitement and exhaustion; inspirational texts are good. Keep your emotions on a calm plane.

Conversation should also be kept to a minimum. You might be very talkative for the first day. I know I am and it's all about how good the taste of such-and-such is. That's because I'm experiencing food cravings, but they don't last long I've found. They've all gone by the second day, only to resurface when you break the fast and take your first bite of that exquisite fruit, and it will taste exquisite!

SOLO OR WITH A FRIEND?

It's helpful to have a companion for the joy of sharing and for support. You can go solo, of course, but a companion is especially helpful with massages and if you're well away from civilisation.

WHEN TO FAST

Since you are likely to chill easily, it's preferable to pick a warm season – late spring to early autumn are usually warm enough. While I don't

recommend fasting in winter – unless you're sick – some people do. Warm simple miso soups and saunas are the order of the days. Why not hibernate and keep warm as the animals do?

WHAT TO HAVE

A water fast is best for healthy people who want to improve their wellbeing. However, anyone, even unwell people, after months of improving their diets, can consider a water fast of short duration – one to three days. It's best to only drink pure spring water or well-filtered water; you can include warmed herbal teas. (If you're fruit fasting, I recommend either watermelon in the height of summer or grapes (seeded) in late summer/early autumn.

THE ONE-DAY FAST

I recommend taking it slowly. A gradual cleansing releases the poisons slowly, never overtaxing the capacity of the eliminative organs. Just start with one day a week. Sunday is good for many of us. Have your evening meal on the Saturday as usual. Make it light, if you can. A small simple salad or a few pieces of fruit. Drink water during Sunday and break the fast with a light meal of fruit or salad in the evening.

A LONGER FAST: PREPARING FOR THE TWO OR MORE DAYS' FAST

I like the 72-hour fast. Weekends are often easier for most of us – or, even better, you could pick part of your holidays. If you're planning a weekend fast, I would begin with a light meal (a simple salad or fruit) around lunchtime on the Thursday, fast all day Friday and Saturday and break the fast Sunday lunchtime. That way, if you're supposed to be back at work or study the Monday, it is manageable, though I'd take the Monday off, too. I find I'm not that interested in work; in fact, much of the usual activities with which we fill our lives take a back seat. You will, no doubt, get back into the flow in time – after that deep sense of relaxation slowly ebbs. I remember one friend telling me he was "still blissing out" two days after his fast had ended.

DAY 1 AND DAY 2

- Upon waking, massage the face, neck, hands and feet.
- Deep breathing (if in nature)
- Walking gently, stretching, light yoga
- Short sunbaths (up to three minutes); if you are in a natural setting away from the general

public, discard all clothing to improve the absorption of UVB rays through the skin. (See The sun on the [WELLBEING](#) page)

- Swimming/bathing (if in nature)
- Reading inspiring texts
- Gentle conversations
- Massaging, especially the feet – scrub the soles with a stiff brush to aid elimination; the feet have a high concentration of sweat glands
- Skinbrushing
- and, in general, resting.

As if it needs to be said, but I will, drink water as needed. Just to satisfy your thirst. There's no point beyond that; it puts a strain on the kidneys. If your urine is light lemon-coloured, well and good; if it's dark, drink more water.

DAY 3

I highly recommend a warm water enema – well, actually three. It takes more than one to clean you out. You could have one on Day 2 as well. Some people recommend them every day of the fast. To me, it depends on your diet and how often you fast. Colonic irrigations are also good, especially for those with many years of poor eating, after which the colon has become contorted with accumulated wastes.

If you feel discomfort in the colon, it could be that the concentration of toxins in the colon is higher than in the bloodstream and the poisons are being reabsorbed. In that case, an enema should be used daily to cleanse the colon; and then as frequently as needed. As the body becomes more and more purified through improved diet and fasting, the use of enemas can be reduced. Baths should be of short duration, in lukewarm water.

BREAKING THE FAST

Depending on the severity of the toxic condition, the tongue may remain coated for some time; hence the criterion for breaking the fast when the tongue clears cannot always be applied. If the fast must be broken before the tongue clears and hunger returns, repeat it at a later date until all signs of toxicity disappear.

No matter how long the fast, break it gradually. Take as many days to break a fast as the number of days fasted. Never end a fast during a period of acute discomfort (crisis). Wait until you feel better. End the fast at midday with a glass of

citrus juice or fresh pineapple juice diluted with water and drink it every two hours. Sip it slowly, take at least half an hour to drink the cup. This will get the digestive juices flowing.

Continue taking citrus juice until you feel ready to take more concentrated juices. When ready, start eating juicy fruit such as the mango, orange, peach, melon or similar in-season. Later, you may have heavier fruit such as apple and paw paw. Then add salads for a day, or longer, especially in summer.

While some people report spending more time on the toilet than in bed during the first night after breaking the fast, I've never found that. Rather, returning to regular bowel movements takes some time.

AFTER THE FAST

Food should be at room temperature. Your stomach has contracted, so eat small meals. Many people, after breaking the fast, have a tendency to stuff themselves. A big no-no. Not only does it lessen the effect of the fast but it can do serious damage.

LONGER FASTS

A fast of up to 15 days may be taken with safety by those who enjoy moderate health. Once you become familiar with fasting through many short fasts you can progressively increase the duration. I've fasted for five days max. I prefer short ones more frequently, certainly a few times throughout the warmer months. I don't have experience of longer fasts. Certainly do not try long fasts in a polluted environment. Read books on fasting. Consult others. And get checked out by a health practitioner.

THE DAILY FAST

(aka INTERMITTENT FASTING)

See When to Eat Breakfast on the [FOOD](#) page.

ABOVE ALL

Fast voluntarily and with desire. Otherwise there will be less benefit. Do it with joy. It's not meant to be a slog.

WARNINGS

Fasting while seriously ill for extended periods of time should not be undertaken except under the supervision of a health practitioner well-versed in fasting and nutrition.