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After conducting over 30,000 fasts, Herbert M. Shelton is the foremost authority on this subject today. For forty-five years he supervised short and lengthy fasts, for people of all ages, in varying states of health and impairment.

For over thirty-six years, Dr. Shelton has managed his own institution where people from all parts of the world came to fast and later to *maintain* health.

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*Introduction to Natural Hygiene*

*Syphilis*

# **FASTING CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE**

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**HERBERT M. SHELTON**

**NATURAL HYGIENE PRESS, INC.**

STX  
RM226.5  
S46  
1964

**FASTING CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE**

First printing, July 1964

Second printing, March 1965

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Printed in the United States of America

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Natural Hygiene Press, Inc.  
205 W. Wacker, Chicago, Illinois 60606

*Dedication*

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To the millions of sufferers who are agonizing through their lives in search of health and not knowing where or how to find it, in the firm conviction, born of years of practical experience in the application of fasting to the problems of health, that fasting and a *Hygienic* way of life will lead to vigorous health, this book is dedicated by the author.

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**FASTING CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE**

## Preface

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Few subjects going back in mankind's history are so widely misunderstood, in our modern, high-caloric civilization, as fasting. The important role it can play, and has played, is often distorted in the public mind, or twisted out of shape by grotesque and groundless fears, based not on truth but on prejudices, scientific misinformation or complete lack of information.

The purpose of this book, based upon my own experiences, studies and observations over a period of forty-five years of conducting fasts as a *Hygienist*, is to put into focus the true role fasting can play in promoting and maintaining good health, in eliminating pain, in weight reduction and control, and in prolonging human life.

This role will be explained and discussed in detail, not as a *cure*, for fasting itself is not a *cure*, but as a means of permitting the resources of the body itself to take over, to effect healing, or take off pounds at a rate unmatched by any other method.

One of the primary purposes of this book is to answer the many questions about fasting which have begun to flood the offices of those who write about weight problems for the newspapers and magazines. Since overeating and overweight have become primary health problems in the United States and some European countries, the quest for information about how to lose pounds safely is a never-ending one on the modern scene.

At the same time a revival of interest in the means of mind-body care as developed by those who believe in *Natural Hygiene* has brought close attention to the theories and findings of *Hygienists* developed over nearly a century and a half.

It is axiomatic that the medical profession has battled stoutly all these theories. Many of the advances of recent decades have been achieved only after bitter warfare and denunciation by entrenched medical opinions.

Progress has been made inch by inch—spoonful by spoonful—in the business of developing proper eating and living habits. Yet fasting goes back over the centuries—not only in matters of health, but also in religious ritual.

In recent years investigators who have contributed greatly are Dr. Henry S. Tanner, Sylvester Graham, Dr. Robert Walter, Dr. John H. Tilden and Dr. George S. Weger.

One could multiply these names many times over. These are the experienced men of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—scientists, investigators, scholars who dedicated themselves to the study and practice of the basic truths of *Hygienic* living with particular emphasis on the role of the fast.

It must be understood that for the best results, it is unwise to departmentalize too much in our thinking. The body is a complex organism in which all parts are interrelated. Good health therefore is a single thing, encompassing and including every aspect of ourselves—physical, mental and emotional. What we are considering here goes beyond any simple problems. It concerns the whole individual.

These are general considerations presenting an approach to good living. Only the expert in fasting is capable of directing the individual with his particular health problem, his special need and goal. Our purpose here is to give the layman, the average reader, a broad perspective with some details and occasionally technical background information and hope, in an area that has to do with ways by which man can live better, feel better—last longer.

Because overeating has become one of the great physiological and psychological problems of our age here in America, I am placing particular importance on this aspect of the subject in the early chapters of this book. Weight reduction alone is only one part of the picture. To maintain proper weight and proper physical condition, many of us require a total renovation of our eating habits, our working habits, our understanding of the real need for rest and relaxation. All of these are a part of the broad philosophy embodied in the chapters of this book.

There is no necessity to be overweight, nor any need to be crippled with self-inflicted disease brought on by the totality of destructive living habits, which too many of us pursue.

I am not therefore presenting merely the *Hygienic* concepts of diet, exercise, rest, correct habits and routines. For the present indeed, I will deal with a totally new way of life.

Herbert M. Shelton

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PART ONE

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## *Fasting and Weight Loss*

## *Fasting and You!*

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Fasting is much more than simply not eating: it is both a science and an art. It has meaning in terms of overall well-being and affects the psychological and emotional aspects of our lives.

Fasting, as we use the term here, means total abstinence from all food for a definite period of time. The word comes from the old English word *faesten*, which means firm or fixed. In other words, the fast is something we hold to on a firm basis under controlled and fixed conditions.

In religious terms it may mean abstinence from certain food on certain holy days. But this is partial abstinence rather than total abstinence. I know persons who have "fasted" during Lent and actually gained weight rather than lost, because they substituted for the dishes they gave up foods which put on even more pounds.

Those who think that fasting is equivalent to starvation are entirely wrong. There are basically two periods in the process of abstaining from food that should concern us here—the *fasting* period proper and the period of *starvation*.

As we study the phenomena of abstinence in greater detail, the distinction between these two phases will become clear. From the outset however, it is essential to understand that the fasting stage continues so long as the body supports itself on the stored reserves within its tissues. Starvation begins when abstinence is carried beyond the time when these stored reserves are used up or have dropped to a dangerously low level.

We must understand also that there is much loose terminology that adds to confusion on the subject of fasting. For example: we hear people speak of going on a "water fast" which technically would imply that they were giving up drinking water. What they mean, actually, is that they are going on a fast in which they give up everything but water. The same illogicality exists in the expression, "going on a fruit



juice fast" or a "vegetable juice fast." Again what is meant is that they are giving up everything *except* fruit or vegetable juice.

The term "partial fast" is used for any form of fasting where individuals put extremely limiting conditions on what they eat. The misuse of the word "*starving*," not only in the vernacular, but even in some scientific papers, has done vast harm. The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *stearfan*, which means to die, not only from lack of food but also from overall exposure to cold. This is how the phrase "starving cold" developed.

Starvation is a process of dying, in effect. You cannot starve yourself into good health. You can fast for proper and reasonable periods and thereby improve your physical condition and often restore yourself to good health. It is possible to abstain from food for long periods of time with beneficial effects. At the point where the experienced advisor who conducts the fast realizes that the second phase of abstinence from food is imminent, the fast is broken.

I have said the fast is part of a new way of life which I outline in this book. Thus it is not used only to lose weight. It can be and certainly is equally important as a part of the function of maintaining or even restoring good health.

The sick or wounded animal finds a secluded spot where he can keep warm, where he is protected from the weather, where he can have peace and quiet and be undisturbed. There he rests and fasts. He may, for example, have lost a limb, but he lies there in his privacy and generally recovers without drugs, without bandages or surgery.

In the animal world fasting is a tremendously important factor of existence. Animals fast not only when sick or wounded but also during hibernation or aestivation (sleeping throughout the summer in tropical climates).

Some animals fast during the mating season and in many cases during the nursing period. Some birds fast while their eggs are being hatched. Some animals fast immediately after birth. There are forms of spiders who do not eat for six months after they are born. Some wild creatures fast when taken into captivity, and a domestic pet, a dog, or a cat, may not eat for several days when it comes into a new environment. Animals also survive forced fasts during periods of drought, snow, cold, and live for long periods when no food is available.

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This writer has been engaged in conducting fasts since the summer of 1920. In this period of approximately forty-five years, I have conducted thousands of fasts ranging from a few days duration to ninety days, both for weight reduction and in connection with helping the body recover from physical impairment.

One particular case of an elderly man is of special interest because the results were so successful.

Mr. A.B. was seventy years of age and had been sick a large part of those years. For thirteen years he had suffered with bronchial asthma and during this time he had been hospitalized five times. For an even longer time he had suffered with sinus trouble. For six years he had been completely deaf in his left ear, while he had suffered with an enlarged prostate gland for more than six years and had been impotent for a few years. He wore glasses, was bald headed, and had the usual "minor symptoms" that indicate the condition of his organism was not good, although it is common to ignore these evidences of incipient disease.

Although he had been treated by the usual methods over the years, he had realized no genuine benefits from this care. Like others who suffer as he did, he grew from bad to worse. It is generally known that the regular care of asthmatics is purely palliative and that the patient commonly grows progressively worse with the passage of time. It

is equally well known that the regular modes of care fail to do more than provide doubtful temporary relief for the sufferer with sinus disease. It seems hardly necessary to add that nothing of real value is done for deafness and for enlargement of the prostate gland. All of these conditions are commonly understood to be *incurable*.

Leaving his hospital bed in Chicago, the fifth time he was hospitalized for asthma, Mr. A.B. went directly to the airport and boarded a plane going south and went to a place that was reputed to be very successful in its care of asthma sufferers. Still wheezing, he was uncertain that he could make the trip, but had determined to try. His own statement was that he had suffered enough and that he was convinced that the regular methods of care offered him no real promise of health. Like many thousands of other asthmatics, he had given the regular plans of care every opportunity to free him effectively of his suffering and they had failed him.

Arriving at the institution in the southwest, he was admitted and told that he would have to discontinue at once and thereafter all drugs that he had been using for relief. "But," he asked, "what shall I do if I have an attack of asthma?"

"You will grit your teeth and clench your fists and suffer through it," was the reply. "You cannot get well if you continue to use drugs."

He was sent to bed and instructed to remain there and take nothing into his mouth but water until he was told that he could resume eating. The treatment is going to be worse than the disease, he thought. Could he go without food? He was weak from years of suffering and from a lengthy period during which he was unable to secure enough oxygen. He was assured that he would be carefully watched and that no harm would befall him.

With a certain amount of trepidation he entered upon what was to be a new and surprisingly pleasant experience. Fasting is not always a pleasant experience, but it can be a very interesting and even highly pleasurable experience. The freedom and ease that one experiences during a period of abstinence from food often enables one to discover new and previously undreamed-of depths of meaning to life.

About four o'clock in the morning of his first night of fasting, Mr. A.B. developed a severe paroxysm of asthma. He was unable to breathe while lying in bed, so he sat up on the side of the bed and rang for assistance. The doctor came and after observing and examining him, said: "You'll be all

right in a brief time. It will take about twenty-four hours for you to become free of asthmatic symptoms, and then you'll be comfortable."

When the doctor left, Mr. A.B. was struggling for air. "What kind of a place have I come to," Mr. A.B. asked the man in the next bed. "They won't even do anything to relieve me of my attack." He continued to struggle for air for a few more minutes, then relief came and he fell asleep.

When the doctor saw him again in the morning, Mr. A.B. was feeling so well that he was ready to forgive the seeming neglect of the latter part of the night. He was more than overjoyed when he went on day after day breathing as easily as when he was a small boy, with not the slightest sign of asthma. He had not another single paroxysm of asthma so long as he remained at the institution. His sinuses were still draining and the fast was continued. After about six days without food, he was able to void urine as freely as a boy. His prostate gland had shrunk to nearly normal size.

He continued to fast and watched a day by day disappearance of symptoms, until his sinuses cleared up, his breathing was a pleasure and his chest was a source of real joy. On the twenty-fifth day of the fast, he asked the doctor if he could not break the fast. He was informed that this would be premature, that he was not fully recovered and that it would be wise to continue. "You are not in jail," said the doctor. "You cannot be made to fast against your will. But, if you want my best advice you will continue for a while."

He took the doctor's advice and went ahead with the fast. What will always seem to him as a miracle was the fact that on the thirty-sixth day of the fast, he regained his hearing in his deaf ear. His hearing was so good that he could easily hear the low ticking of a small watch when held at arm's length from his ear. Equally important is the fact that the recovery of hearing was permanent. The fast was continued through the forty-second day and then feeding was resumed.

But he had another surprise in store for him. He discovered, upon his return home, a few weeks after the fast was broken, that he was no longer impotent. As restoration of potency in men and overcoming of frigidity in women are not uncommon results of the fast, this was no surprise to the head of the institution.

This is no fanciful case, but an actual account of the recovery of a man who had suffered as I have described and who underwent the fast, as I have here portrayed it, and who

made the recovery that has been pictured. It was not an unusual case, except in the variety of conditions that he suffered with, unless we say that the recovery of hearing is not a rule when the deaf undergo a fast. It is only an occasional result of fasting. This is so because deafness, like loss of vision, may be due to a variety of abnormal conditions of the ear, and not all of them are remediable. Blindness is only occasionally recoverable by fasting for the same reason, although restoration of good vision, in errors of refraction, is not at all uncommon.

The dramatic recoveries that occur during a fast of proper length and taken under the most favorable conditions can be believed only by those who have had opportunity to observe them. The general tendency of both the layman and the physician, when hearing stories of such recoveries, is to dismiss them as too fantastic for consideration. Yet, there is nothing miraculous about the effects of the fast. If we think on the matter a little, we cannot escape the conclusion that fasting is the most natural and the most sensible means of care of the sick body of which we have any knowledge.

For over one hundred and forty years, natural *Hygienists* have employed the fast as a means of promoting health and enabling the body to recover speedily from illness. They have amassed extraordinary clinical experience in this area. These experiences turn into the deeply-rooted conviction that the fast is a constructive force which must be utilized and developed as part of the regular practices of modern life.

There are, of course, critics of fasting. Most of them know very little about fasting, or its techniques. A. Rabogliati, A.M., M.D., F.R.C.S., of England so well puts it: "The most popular criticisms of fasting are written by people who have never missed a meal in their lives."

Whether it is to maintain or to restore good health, to gain weight or to lose weight, the role of fasting is a vital factor that can no longer be overlooked by any who are concerned with personal health and well-being—mentally and physically.

## *Pounds that Slip Away*

The big business of losing weight, figure control, diet-in-comfort plans and similar programs have developed into one of the great industries of our age. Everyone considers himself an expert. Fad diets rage for a few months and give way to the next crash wonder. This week it is an ice cream diet. The next it is bananas. The week after that a protein diet, nothing but juicy steaks. Eat yourself *thin!*

Overweight is becoming an increasingly perplexing problem, not alone for adult men and women, but for children also. Several facts are responsible for this, but, in general, we may say that the increased abundance of food, together with the increased income of the American people, on the one hand, and the changes in work resulting from the shortened work-day, shortened work-week, modern transportation and the many labor-saving devices that take much of the burden off the shoulders of men and women, have resulted in the increase of weight. Just at a time when our reduced labors have reduced our need for food, increased production, artificially increased palatability and increased income have served to increase our food consumption.

*Hygienists* are realists. Nothing can circumvent the fact that the quickest, surest, safest way to lose weight is by fasting, and the surest way of maintaining the proper weight level is by refusing to return to the wrong eating habits.

The disappointingly slow method of losing weight by "going on a diet" is rarely very successful for the reason that it is a long-drawn-out process requiring more self-control and a much longer period of control than the average person is capable of. A not uncommon outcome of such programs is that, after a brief period, during which time a few pounds are lost, the obese individual returns to his prior overeating and puts back all the weight lost, and often additional pounds. Only rarely does one see an obese individual stick to a reducing diet for a prolonged period.

To begin with, as I have stated in many lectures, and will continue to remind the reader, do not enter upon a fast of your own without the guidance of an expert in the field of conducting fasts. While fasting is perfectly safe as a health and weight reducing measure, it does involve the complex human organism, and it should be watched over and directed at all times by a qualified person who knows what he may expect, or what trouble signs to watch for during the fast.

How much can one expect to lose? The loss rate of course varies with the individual, but the average for a protracted fast runs around two and one-half pounds a day. Is this heavy weight loss safe? It is as long as it is conducted under proper controls and with proper and continuing rest.

Let me cite here briefly the most striking advantages of fasting for weight reduction:

1. Safe rapid loss is registered on the fast.
2. The fast is far more pleasant than the reducing diet—the nagging desire to eat is missing.
3. Weight loss may be secured without resulting in flabbiness or sagging of the skin and tissues. However, this is not true of elderly persons.

When the overweight individual undergoes a marked reduction of weight, several indications of improved health follow immediately:

1. Breathing is freer.
2. There is greater ease of movement.
3. There is loss of "that tired feeling."
4. There is a disappearance of the sense of fullness and discomfort in the abdomen.
5. Symptoms of indigestion cease to annoy.
6. Other discomforts cease.
7. Blood pressure is lowered and the load the heart has to carry is lessened.

All of these evidences of benefit are noticeable, but the improvements are commonly out of all proportion to the weight lost, thus indicating that reduction of the amount of food eaten itself resulted in improved health. There is every reason for thinking that the greatly reduced intake of sugar, starches and fat and the over-all reduction of the amount of food eaten is beneficial.

In 1962, a woman began a fast to reduce weight under my guidance. At the conclusion she told me: "It has been an amazing experience: the pleasure of seeing those pounds melt away. I never saw fat go so fast." Another woman remarked

after a fast of fifteen days undertaken for reducing: "I was at a well-advertised health spa. They kept me on a diet of seven hundred calories a day. I was hungry all the time. This fast has been a pleasure."

A third woman said after a week of fasting to lose pounds: "This has been the most remarkable experience of my life. I have enjoyed this fast and rest. I never knew before that people fast, but I have enjoyed it."

Are these expressions typical? Hardly. Fasting is not always the pleasant experience these women found it to be, but it is rarely disagreeable enough to justify discontinuing it until one's goal has been attained. But it is frequently a far more pleasurable experience than many people have in their daily eating habits. In many conditions of life, every meal is followed by discomforts and even actual pain. In these states, the fast is often such a relief that it becomes a joy.

There is always great satisfaction in watching the fat melt away at the rate of two to four pounds a day. To lose nineteen pounds in a week is a highly pleasing experience (there are exceptions in which the weight loss is not so great) for the first several days of the fast. The rate of loss is not uniform and there are periods when the scales register no loss for a day or two at a time. The rapid loss registered at the beginning of the fast does not continue throughout the whole of a long fast.

Not only is there safety in fasting for weight reduction, there is also greater ease than there is in dieting. One reason for this is that unlike almost all dieters, the faster is not hungry all the time. His taste buds are not constantly tempting him. The flood of gastric juices is not being constantly activated.

The faster may experience some desire for food during the first or second day of the fast or may not desire food at all. Hunger subsides usually by the end of the third day. And unless the fast is broken for some reason, the faster can continue without experiencing either weakness or hunger.

I state these facts out of my own personal experience but they are also verified by investigations. Two series of experiments carried out by regular medical men in accredited hospitals, have developed empirical evidence sufficient to satisfy the experimenter scientifically that fasting is not only a safe and speedy way of reducing weight, but is also the most comfortable way of reducing.

One of these experiments was carried out by Lyon Bloom, M.D., in the Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, where

## *Fasting and You!*

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Fasting, as we use the term here, means total abstinence from all food for a definite period of time. The word comes from the old English word *faesten*, which means firm or fixed. In other words, the fast is something we hold to on a firm basis under controlled and fixed conditions.

In religious terms it may mean abstinence from certain food on certain holy days. But this is partial abstinence rather than total abstinence. I know persons who have "fasted" during Lent and actually gained weight rather than lost, because they substituted for the dishes they gave up foods which put on even more pounds.

Those who think that fasting is equivalent to starvation are entirely wrong. There are basically two periods in the process of abstaining from food that should concern us here—the *fasting* period proper and the period of *starvation*.

As we study the phenomena of abstinence in greater detail, the distinction between these two phases will become clear. From the outset however, it is essential to understand that the fasting stage continues so long as the body supports itself on the stored reserves within its tissues. Starvation begins when abstinence is carried beyond the time when these stored reserves are used up or have dropped to a dangerously low level.

We must understand also that there is much loose terminology that adds to confusion on the subject of fasting. For example: we hear people speak of going on a "water fast" which technically would imply that they were giving up drinking water. What they mean, actually, is that they are going on a fast in which they give up everything but water. The same illogicality exists in the expression, "going on a fruit

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The term "partial fast" is used for any form of fasting where individuals put extremely limiting conditions on what they eat. The misuse of the word "*starving*," not only in the vernacular, but even in some scientific papers, has done vast harm. The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *stearfan*, which means to die, not only from lack of food but also from overall exposure to cold. This is how the phrase "starving cold" developed.

Starvation is a process of dying, in effect. You cannot starve yourself into good health. You can fast for proper and reasonable periods and thereby improve your physical condition and often restore yourself to good health. It is possible to abstain from food for long periods of time with beneficial effects. At the point where the experienced advisor who conducts the fast realizes that the second phase of abstinence from food is imminent, the fast is broken.

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This writer has been engaged in conducting fasts since the summer of 1920. In this period of approximately forty-five years, I have conducted thousands of fasts ranging from a few days duration to ninety days, both for weight reduction and in connection with helping the body recover from physical impairment.

One particular case of an elderly man is of special interest because the results were so successful.

Mr. A.B. was seventy years of age and had been sick a large part of those years. For thirteen years he had suffered with bronchial asthma and during this time he had been hospitalized five times. For an even longer time he had suffered with sinus trouble. For six years he had been completely deaf in his left ear, while he had suffered with an enlarged prostate gland for more than six years and had been impotent for a few years. He wore glasses, was bald headed, and had the usual "minor symptoms" that indicate the condition of his organism was not good, although it is common to ignore these evidences of incipient disease.

Although he had been treated by the usual methods over the years, he had realized no genuine benefits from this care. Like others who suffer as he did, he grew from bad to worse. It is generally known that the regular care of asthmatics is purely palliative and that the patient commonly grows progressively worse with the passage of time. It

is equally well known that the regular modes of care fail to do more than provide doubtful temporary relief for the sufferer with sinus disease. It seems hardly necessary to add that nothing of real value is done for deafness and for enlargement of the prostate gland. All of these conditions are commonly understood to be *incurable*.

Leaving his hospital bed in Chicago, the fifth time he was hospitalized for asthma, Mr. A.B. went directly to the airport and boarded a plane going south and went to a place that was reputed to be very successful in its care of asthma sufferers. Still wheezing, he was uncertain that he could make the trip, but had determined to try. His own statement was that he had suffered enough and that he was convinced that the regular methods of care offered him no real promise of health. Like many thousands of other asthmatics, he had given the regular plans of care every opportunity to free him effectively of his suffering and they had failed him.

Arriving at the institution in the southwest, he was admitted and told that he would have to discontinue at once and thereafter all drugs that he had been using for relief. "But," he asked, "what shall I do if I have an attack of asthma?"

"You will grit your teeth and clench your fists and suffer through it," was the reply. "You cannot get well if you continue to use drugs."

He was sent to bed and instructed to remain there and take nothing into his mouth but water until he was told that he could resume eating. The treatment is going to be worse than the disease, he thought. Could he go without food? He was weak from years of suffering and from a lengthy period during which he was unable to secure enough oxygen. He was assured that he would be carefully watched and that no harm would befall him.

With a certain amount of trepidation he entered upon what was to be a new and surprisingly pleasant experience. Fasting is not always a pleasant experience, but it can be a very interesting and even highly pleasurable experience. The freedom and ease that one experiences during a period of abstinence from food often enables one to discover new and previously undreamed-of depths of meaning to life.

About four o'clock in the morning of his first night of fasting, Mr. A.B. developed a severe paroxysm of asthma. He was unable to breathe while lying in bed, so he sat up on the side of the bed and rang for assistance. The doctor came and after observing and examining him, said: "You'll be all

right in a brief time. It will take about twenty-four hours for you to become free of asthmatic symptoms, and then you'll be comfortable."

When the doctor left, Mr. A.B. was struggling for air. "What kind of a place have I come to," Mr. A.B. asked the man in the next bed. "They won't even do anything to relieve me of my attack." He continued to struggle for air for a few more minutes, then relief came and he fell asleep.

When the doctor saw him again in the morning, Mr. A.B. was feeling so well that he was ready to forgive the seeming neglect of the latter part of the night. He was more than overjoyed when he went on day after day breathing as easily as when he was a small boy, with not the slightest sign of asthma. He had not another single paroxysm of asthma so long as he remained at the institution. His sinuses were still draining and the fast was continued. After about six days without food, he was able to void urine as freely as a boy. His prostate gland had shrunken to nearly normal size.

He continued to fast and watched a day by day disappearance of symptoms, until his sinuses cleared up, his breathing was a pleasure and his chest was a source of real joy. On the twenty-fifth day of the fast, he asked the doctor if he could not break the fast. He was informed that this would be premature, that he was not fully recovered and that it would be wise to continue. "You are not in jail," said the doctor. "You cannot be made to fast against your will. But, if you want my best advice you will continue for a while."

He took the doctor's advice and went ahead with the fast. What will always seem to him as a miracle was the fact that on the thirty-sixth day of the fast, he regained his hearing in his deaf ear. His hearing was so good that he could easily hear the low ticking of a small watch when held at arm's length from his ear. Equally important is the fact that the recovery of hearing was permanent. The fast was continued through the forty-second day and then feeding was resumed.

But he had another surprise in store for him. He discovered, upon his return home, a few weeks after the fast was broken, that he was no longer impotent. As restoration of potency in men and overcoming of frigidity in women are not uncommon results of the fast, this was no surprise to the head of the institution.

This is no fanciful case, but an actual account of the recovery of a man who had suffered as I have described and who underwent the fast, as I have here portrayed it, and who

made the recovery that has been pictured. It was not an unusual case, except in the variety of conditions that he suffered with, unless we say that the recovery of hearing is not a rule when the deaf undergo a fast. It is only an occasional result of fasting. This is so because deafness, like loss of vision, may be due to a variety of abnormal conditions of the ear, and not all of them are remediable. Blindness is only occasionally recoverable by fasting for the same reason, although restoration of good vision, in errors of refraction, is not at all uncommon.

The dramatic recoveries that occur during a fast of proper length and taken under the most favorable conditions can be believed only by those who have had opportunity to observe them. The general tendency of both the layman and the physician, when hearing stories of such recoveries, is to dismiss them as too fantastic for consideration. Yet, there is nothing miraculous about the effects of the fast. If we think on the matter a little, we cannot escape the conclusion that fasting is the most natural and the most sensible means of care of the sick body of which we have any knowledge.

For over one hundred and forty years, natural *Hygienists* have employed the fast as a means of promoting health and enabling the body to recover speedily from illness. They have amassed extraordinary clinical experience in this area. These experiences turn into the deeply-rooted conviction that the fast is a constructive force which must be utilized and developed as part of the regular practices of modern life.

There are, of course, critics of fasting. Most of them know very little about fasting, or its techniques. A. Rabogliati, A.M., M.D., F.R.C.S., of England so well puts it: "The most popular criticisms of fasting are written by people who have never missed a meal in their lives."

Whether it is to maintain or to restore good health, to gain weight or to lose weight, the role of fasting is a vital factor that can no longer be overlooked by any who are concerned with personal health and well-being—mentally and physically.

## *Pounds that Slip Away*

The big business of losing weight, figure control, diet-in-comfort plans and similar programs have developed into one of the great industries of our age. Everyone considers himself an expert. Fad diets rage for a few months and give way to the next crash wonder. This week it is an ice cream diet. The next it is bananas. The week after that a protein diet, nothing but juicy steaks. Eat yourself *thin!*

Overweight is becoming an increasingly perplexing problem, not alone for adult men and women, but for children also. Several facts are responsible for this, but, in general, we may say that the increased abundance of food, together with the increased income of the American people, on the one hand, and the changes in work resulting from the shortened work-day, shortened work-week, modern transportation and the many labor-saving devices that take much of the burden off the shoulders of men and women, have resulted in the increase of weight. Just at a time when our reduced labors have reduced our need for food, increased production, artificially increased palatability and increased income have served to increase our food consumption.

*Hygienists* are realists. Nothing can circumvent the fact that the quickest, surest, safest way to lose weight is by fasting, and the surest way of maintaining the proper weight level is by refusing to return to the wrong eating habits.

The disappointingly slow method of losing weight by "going on a diet" is rarely very successful for the reason that it is a long-drawn-out process requiring more self-control and a much longer period of control than the average person is capable of. A not uncommon outcome of such programs is that, after a brief period, during which time a few pounds are lost, the obese individual returns to his prior overeating and puts back all the weight lost, and often additional pounds. Only rarely does one see an obese individual stick to a reducing diet for a prolonged period.



To begin with, as I have stated in many lectures, and will continue to remind the reader, do not enter upon a fast on your own without the guidance of an expert in the field of conducting fasts. While fasting is perfectly safe as a health and weight reducing measure, it does involve the complex human organism, and it should be watched over and directed at all times by a qualified person who knows what he may expect, or what trouble signs to watch for during the fast.

How much can one expect to lose? The loss rate of course varies with the individual, but the average for a protracted fast runs around two and one-half pounds a day. Is this heavy weight loss safe? It is as long as it is conducted under proper controls and with proper and continuing rest.

Let me cite here briefly the most striking advantages of fasting for weight reduction:

1. Safe rapid loss is registered on the fast.
2. The fast is far more pleasant than the reducing diet—the nagging desire to eat is missing.
3. Weight loss may be secured without resulting in flabbiness or sagging of the skin and tissues. However, this is not true of elderly persons.

When the overweight individual undergoes a marked reduction of weight, several indications of improved health follow immediately:

1. Breathing is freer.
2. There is greater ease of movement.
3. There is loss of “that tired feeling.”
4. There is a disappearance of the sense of fullness and discomfort in the abdomen.
5. Symptoms of indigestion cease to annoy.
6. Other discomforts cease.
7. Blood pressure is lowered and the load the heart has to carry is lessened.

All of these evidences of benefit are noticeable, but the improvements are commonly out of all proportion to the weight lost, thus indicating that reduction of the amount of food eaten itself resulted in improved health. There is every reason for thinking that the greatly reduced intake of sugar, starches and fat and the over-all reduction of the amount of food eaten is beneficial.

In 1962, a woman began a fast to reduce weight under my guidance. At the conclusion she told me: “It has been an amazing experience: the pleasure of seeing those pounds melt away. I never saw fat go so fast.” Another woman remarked

after a fast of fifteen days undertaken for reducing: “I was at a well-advertised health spa. They kept me on a diet of seven hundred calories a day. I was hungry all the time. This fast has been a pleasure.”

A third woman said after a week of fasting to lose pounds: “This has been the most remarkable experience of my life. I have enjoyed this fast and rest. I never knew before that people fast, but I have enjoyed it.”

Are these expressions typical? Hardly. Fasting is not always the pleasant experience these women found it to be, but it is rarely disagreeable enough to justify discontinuing it until one's goal has been attained. But it is frequently a far more pleasurable experience than many people have in their daily eating habits. In many conditions of life, every meal is followed by discomforts and even actual pain. In these states, the fast is often such a relief that it becomes a joy.

There is always great satisfaction in watching the fat melt away at the rate of two to four pounds a day. To lose nineteen pounds in a week is a highly pleasing experience (there are exceptions in which the weight loss is not so great) for the first several days of the fast. The rate of loss is not uniform and there are periods when the scales register no loss for a day or two at a time. The rapid loss registered at the beginning of the fast does not continue throughout the whole of a long fast.

Not only is there safety in fasting for weight reduction, there is also greater ease than there is in dieting. One reason for this is that unlike almost all dieters, the faster is not hungry all the time. His taste buds are not constantly tempting him. The flood of gastric juices is not being constantly activated.

The faster may experience some desire for food during the first or second day of the fast or may not desire food at all. Hunger subsides usually by the end of the third day. And unless the fast is broken for some reason, the faster can continue without experiencing either weakness or hunger.

I state these facts out of my own personal experience but they are also verified by investigations. Two series of experiments carried out by regular medical men in accredited hospitals, have developed empirical evidence sufficient to satisfy the experimenter scientifically that fasting is not only a safe and speedy way of reducing weight, but is also the most comfortable way of reducing.

One of these experiments was carried out by Lyon Bloom, M.D., in the Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, where

he conducted a lengthy series of experiments on fasting in reducing weight. This was followed up by Garfield Duncan, M.D., of the University of Pennsylvania, who is regarded as an authority on weight reduction and whose independent tests include Bloom's findings and conclusions.

These two medical investigators found that fasting men lose an average of 2.6 pounds a day, while women fasters lose an average of 2.7 pounds a day. Both Bloom and Duncan confirm that the fasters were not hungry. Instead they reported an amazing absence of hunger with no apparent mental or physical strain. One of the fasters was quoted as saying: "I feel better than ever before in my life." A woman faster, after forty-eight hours without food, volunteered the information that she was not half so hungry as she used to be after missing a single meal.

Bloom is quoted, from the summary of the experiments: "The present preoccupation with eating at regular intervals leads to the misconception that fasting is unpleasant." He stated further, that, in his opinion, as the result of the findings of these tests, fasting is well tolerated by the human system provided there is free access to water.

In a later series of experiments, Bloom permitted a faster to go four consecutive weeks without food, with no ill effects. In reading his report of experiments to the 111th Annual Meeting of the American Medical Association, Duncan declared: "Although short periods of total fasting may seem barbaric, this method of reduction is marvelously well tolerated." He added that we have evidence that these obese persons fully enjoyed the total fasting periods, due probably in part to their elation that hunger is not a problem while major reductions in weight are being accomplished.

Both men reported that in longer fasts the weight loss levels off to about a pound a day. Bloom stated fasting has also proved to be an extremely effective method of weight control.

In the healthy individual, fasting only to lose weight, I do not insist on rest in bed, but permit considerable exercise—even at times giving a prescribed course of physical workouts. This does not increase the rate of loss as much as one might expect, but it does assist in retaining the tone of the tissues.

The amount of exercise required to reduce weight by exercise alone is far more than the average person is willing to undertake and more than many of them should undergo. To lose one pound of fat requires playing twenty-three holes

of golf, sawing wood for ten and one-half hours, riding a horse for approximately forty-three miles.

Exercise always has the added hazard of increasing the appetite. During the fast it should be controlled and used only to the extent that the adviser feels desirable for the individual undergoing the fasting process.

While there are varying rates of metabolism, my experience indicates that most overweight is due, not to glandular disorders but to habitual overeating. There is little truth in the idea that with some people everything they eat turns to fat. The real truth is that they are eating not only more than they should, but more than they really want.

How much weight loss per day is safe in fasting? The answer here is that since fasting is total abstention, the body itself decides what rate loss is proper. When fat tissue is soft and flabby, weight is usually lost rapidly in the early days of the fast. I have seen losses ranging from four to six pounds a day in fasting. The loss of twenty pounds in a week is not at all difficult in a great many cases.

With those who have a very low rate of metabolism, the rate of loss from the outset of the fast is slow—at times even disappointingly so. Let me reiterate once more, any fasting of more than a few days should be done only under experienced supervision. In all cases where there is any organic defect or chronic ailment, such as heart disease or blood deficiency, even the shortest fast should be supervised. Again let me say there is no essential danger in fasting but one must be properly safeguarded against any danger from hidden conditions that might reveal themselves when no food is taken.

I cite the possibility in order to give the rounded picture of fasting. Let me reassure the reader, however, that such dangers are rare. If the reader is in good health, if he follows the proper procedures under proper experienced guidance, the fast should be for him not only a way of losing poundage, but an exhilarating and exciting adventure, the beginning of a new way of thinking about himself.