



Infrared Sauna Detox Aids in Addiction Recovery

Infrared Sauna Therapy Now Used in Drug Rehabilitation and Health Centers

by Alex Muniz

The need for routine detoxification has become an unavoidable fact of modern life. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimate that 80 percent of all illnesses are a direct reaction to our modern environment and/or lifestyles. A 2005 CDC study of over 2000 Americans found trace amounts of 60 different toxic elements in nearly all participants' urine and blood! A similar survey conducted entirely on newborns by the Environmental Working Group found 300 different chemicals in umbilical cord blood, among them mercury and pesticide compounds. All 200 of the toxins discovered had theretofore never even been observed in infants. Put simply, air pollution, mold, pesticide use, chemical run-off and artificial preservatives are all putting an ever-increasing load on our bodies. And those with unhealthy lifestyles—people who smoke, drink alcohol or abuse narcotics—put an even greater burden on their bodies. Detoxification is critical to optimal health.

SWEAT AND SAUNA SCIENCE

Luckily, we are not without built-in, natural defenses to these many unnatural invaders. The body uses three organs to filter and excrete toxins from the blood: the kidneys, the liver and the sweat glands. The key is to support these pathways to work optimally. While kidney and liver function can be strengthened naturally with nutritional and herbal support, sweating—as the result of vigorous exercise or infrared sauna use—is a much more direct detoxification method that also provides cardiovas-

cular and relaxation benefits. In fact, the detoxification benefits of infrared sauna therapy are being used for a host of toxicity-related health issues—most recently drug and alcohol addiction.

The mechanics of detoxification through perspiration are actually quite simple: An increase in skin and core body temperature causes sweat glands to begin excreting water and urea—both of which include trace amounts of minerals and accumulated toxins—up through the pores and onto the skin. The evaporation of this liquid cools the body, with the added advantage of also removing those toxins brought up in the sweat.

For thousands of years, people all over the world have used hot stone saunas and steam baths to work up sweats on this cleansing principle. But it's important to understand the limitations of traditional saunas and steam baths. They induce sweating by supersaturating and superheating the ambient air to as high as 180 degrees. Such a temperature can itself become a health risk, especially to those sauna users whose bodies are already compromised by a toxic load and/or illness.

SUNLIGHTEN INFRARED SAUNAS

Sunlighten infrared saunas have distinct advantages over other saunas, which make them excellent for detoxification support. It has to do with their technology. Rather than the hot stones of traditional saunas, or the heated ceramic rods found in competing infrared models, Sunlighten saunas use cool-to-the touch, patented Solocarbon wall heater technology to gently raise core body temperature from the inside out by just a few degrees. In most cases, the ambient air temperature in a Sunlighten sauna will only get to around 125 degrees. This all allows for the user to spend far less time in an infrared sauna than a traditional one, while still achieving the deepest, most detoxifying sweat. Indeed, one third-party study on Sunlighten products found that the sweat produced in Sunlighten infrared saunas carries 20 percent toxins, in comparison to the mere 3 percent toxins found in the sweat of those sitting in hot-stone saunas.

A TOOL FOR REHAB CENTERS

Sunlighten infrared saunas' detoxification efficacy has made them a critical tool in some drug addiction treatment centers. Narconon International, a pharmaceutical-free, alternative drug and alcohol rehabilitation program with 100 treatment facilities around the U.S. and world, uses Sunlighten saunas in their "New Life Detoxification Program." Over the course of five hours daily, for two to six weeks, Narconon patients undergo multiple intervals of 20-

to-30 minutes of aerobic activity, 15-to-20 minutes of sauna time and a supervised regimen of vitamin therapy. According to Narconon, these three components work in concert to help patients' bodies break down and excrete deeply stored drug and alcohol toxins, thus hastening their withdrawal from chemical dependency.

TOXINS STORED IN OUR FAT?

Narconon's methods arise from the hypothesis that all toxins are lipophilic and dissolve deep in the body's fat tissue. According to a medical paper appearing in the October 2006 *Journal of Medical Hypotheses*, "Substances that are poorly soluble in water and quite soluble in fat have relatively free access, via lipid-rich cellular membranes, to the cells of all organs including the ability to cross the blood-brain and placental barriers."

The thinking goes that in the case of drug, nicotine or alcohol toxins, trace amounts stored in fat can still lead to residual cravings and persistent poor health. Even if one quits using drugs, alcohol or tobacco, one is not free from addiction so long as these trace toxins remain. Sweating, then, is one of the best ways to loosen and excrete them. As naturopathic medical doctor Walter Crinnion underscores in a March 2007 paper published in *Alternative Therapies of Health and Medicine*, "Saunas can be used very effectively...as a means to enhance the mobilization of fat-soluble xenobiotics." Crinnion does caution that "When one wants to enhance the mobilization of heavy metals and chemical xenobiotics, longer sessions are needed and those should be medically monitored."

At Narconon facilities, this medically monitored environment is provided, and all told, the non-profit claims seven out of every ten New Life Detoxification Program graduates go on to live drug-free lives. Cheryl A. Alderman, Executive Director, of Narconon Florida, claims this success rate is "significantly higher than other programs, due to the technology we use." A paper presented to the 123rd Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association examined the Narconon method closer with a small trial of eight cocaine, valium and heroin addicts undergoing sauna detoxification. Tests on subjects' urine and sweat after sauna sessions revealed an "increase in the concentration of drug metabolite" among seven of the eight participants. Furthermore, all seven showed these same metabolites present in their urine and sweat for five weeks after the sauna sessions ended, thereby "supporting the argument that drug metabolites were mobilized from stores." (Reduction of Drug Residues: Applications in Drug Rehabilitation; Shields, Tennant, et al.)



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SAUNA DETOXIFICATION FOR ALL

Narconon is not alone in their use of infrared saunas. Our good friend Dr. Julian Whitaker has also begun using induced sweating to help detoxify patients with substance abuse problems. In the April 2011 issue of this magazine, he explained in an interview that at his Whitaker Wellness Institute "We see infrared saunas used with patients who are withdrawing from drugs and with patients who are smokers. In smokers' cases, you can sometimes even smell the nicotine coming out of their pores."

One doesn't need to battle a severe addiction, or visit a clinic, to receive the benefits of a Sunlighten sauna, however. Most of Sunlighten's product line is for residential use, and the models require no special plumbing, venting or electrical infrastructure. The utility and technology that lets them excel at detoxification within structured drug and alcohol programs, makes them just as valuable for routine, at-home cleansing. Whether someone struggles with a serious addiction, or simply wants to rid themselves of the day's impurities, the infrared rays of a Sunlighten sauna offer one of the safest, most effective ways to reduce a body's toxic load. ■

Resources

For more information on Sunlighten infrared saunas, call 877-292-0020 or stop by www.sunlighten.com. Visit Narconon.org for more information or to find a treatment facility in your area. For more information on Dr. Julian Whitaker and his Whitaker Wellness Institute call, 800-488-1500 or visit www.whitakerwellness.com. The entire Environmental Working Group study "BodyBurden: The Pollution in Newborns" can be viewed online at <http://www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden2>. The CDC's "National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals" can be read at <http://www.cdc.gov/exposurereport/>.

