

The Best **THERAPY**

Swami Sivananda

Above:
Swami
Sivananda
bathes in the
River Ganges

The natural form of treatment is the best form of treatment. Nature's cure is the best cure. Natural living is the best living. Natural food is the best form of food. Be natural in all ways of living. You will enjoy good health, long life and happiness.

'Swim in nature's sweet stream. Take a plunge bath in it. Float in it and rejoice. Be always healthy, wealthy, strong and wise'

In truth, nature does everything in the cure of all diseases. Medicines help nature in the recuperative work and the regenerative or constructive process in the bodily mechanism. That doctor who tries to help nature is a judicious doctor. By injudicious treatment a doctor may do much harm to the patient. Nature's healing may be interfered with or retarded by drugs. He who says, "I have cured such and such a disease," is an ignorant man.

Avoid drugs. Give up high living. Eat simple, natural foods. Live in the open air. Take cold baths. Be moderate in food, drink and everything else. Wear simple dress. Bask in the sunshine. Enjoy the ultraviolet rays in the morning. Takes exercise regularly. Do not go to doctors frequently. Eat simple, natural foods. Eat to live. Give rest to the organs by occasional fasting. Take raw things as much as possible. Do not throw away the water from rice and boiled vegetables. Use just enough water to cook them properly. You will be healthy, strong and vigorous. You will be endowed with a high standard of vim, vigour and vitality.

If you become ill, nip the malady in the bud. Do not allow it to strike deep roots. Your body is a mysterious machine. You are its driver. Learn how to take care of it properly, how to run it smoothly and efficiently and how to repair it when it gets out of order. Become a master-driver of this wonderful machine. Endeavour to qualify yourself as an expert nature-healer. Obey nature's laws. You cannot find health in bottles with beautiful labels, so do not be carried away by pompous advertisements. Health is nature's reward for obedience to her laws. If you obey the laws of nature the curative and reconstructive forces within your body will rebuild and renew your cells and tissues, heal them, and remove the deleterious effects caused by disobedience of nature's laws.

The man who does not care for his health, who leads a happy-go-lucky life and who is a glutton, is a sinner and a criminal. He must be rigorously punished. He has no business to be sickly when he can have abundant life, vitality, energy and health by natural ways of living and by observing the simple rules and laws of health and hygiene.

OBSERVING THE LAWS OF HEALTH



Good physical health can be achieved and maintained by observing rigidly the laws of health and the rules of hygiene; by taking wholesome, light, substantial, easily digestible, nutritious, bland food; by inhaling pure air; by regular physical exercise; by a daily cold bath and by observing moderation in eating and drinking. Good mental health can be attained and maintained by japa; meditation; celibacy; practice of right conduct; right thinking, right feeling, right speaking and right action; enquiring into the nature of the Self; change of thought; relaxation of mind by dwelling on pleasant thoughts; mental recreation and the practice of cheerfulness.

Shun all sweetmeats ruthlessly. In Bengal one out of five is suffering from diabetes. Horrible and pitiable! This is due to taking too many sweetmeats. After all, man needs very little food on this earth. The palate and the tongue kill him. Man should pay the penalty when he transgresses nature's laws. He will suffer. He must learn lessons.

Oh man! Why are you lingering with disease and poor health? Why are you dragging a cheerless existence? Enjoy the joys of supreme health by treading the path of nature. Swim in nature's sweet stream. Take a plunge bath in it. Float in it and rejoice. Be always healthy, wealthy, strong and wise.

As a wise gardener acts in obedience to the law of nature, so it is laid down for us that we should treat our bodies as instruments of an infinite power, and not as opponents of its purpose. Nature requires but slight attention on our part in the task of maintaining good health.

Pure food, cleanliness, rest and reasonable exercise represent the easy service expected of us for our health, comfort and repair, and in return we may derive a thousandfold blessing.

Cheerfulness is a healthy tonic. Be cheerful always. Mind can cure all the physical diseases of the body by harmonious, healthy and divine thoughts, because all physical diseases have taken their origin in mental ill health. Lack of cheerfulness contributes to physical ill health. If one is always cheerful and entertains good, divine thoughts, he will not suffer from any disease and will have perfect health at all times. It is in your power to continue to be well and youthful as long as you like.

Firm faith in God and reliance upon your eternal immortal inner Atman will keep the mind in a vigorous and positive state. Know that He is manifest as the pure air, as the energising sun, as the vitalising elixir in the mellow fruits. Feel His healing power working through every pore of your body, through every cell, blood corpuscle and nerve fibre. Try to actually feel how your entire system is responding to the recuperative action of the various methods of treatment employed.

Allow the body to freely respond to the action of the natural agents. Put yourself in tune with the source of all health, power and

Words of Wisdom

'Man takes more food than is actually necessary for the upkeep of the body. He eats three times as much as is necessary to keep him well'

THE FOOD FACTOR



There is no mystery about diet. It can be learnt very easily. A correct diet is a fundamental factor in the maintenance of perfect health and a high standard of vitality. Good food is not expensive. A well-balanced diet is not costly.

RECIPE FOR LONGEVITY!

Juice of a small lemon
Spinach
1-2 tomatoes
Fresh coconut
Bananas
Gram soaked in water
Green gram sprouts
1/2 pint of milk
2 tsps of honey

A recipe for wonderful health, vigour, vitality and longevity

strength. The cosmic force for well-being will then fill you. This is the ultimate factor behind all therapeutics, the secret to bear in mind. The doctor cannot impart this vital secret to you. Now you know it. Use it as the background for the treatment of your bodily and mental ills.

With your being harmonised with the all-pervading cosmic Being, with a cheerful, optimistic mind and a body rejuvenated through sufficient rest, wise choice of diet, sunshine, exercise and bath, you will easily ward off all diseases, have wonderful strength and vitality and cross this ocean of earthly existence by vigorous spiritual practices.

An important and prominent factor in keeping good health is the air. We must spend as much of our life as is possible in open air. This is difficult in the case of many persons who have to work indoors in offices, factories and business concerns, as they have to lead their life in congested areas. Those who can afford some time in the early morning should take a walk or run in the invigorating hours of the dawn or in the evening in the open air. The early morning air contains more ozone and hence is most pleasant and effective in giving us exuberant health.

In addition we should do some abdominal gymnastics, sun exercises (surya namaskar), yoga postures and breathing exercises (pranayama). Those who cannot take a walk should certainly do some exercise. They should wear as little clothing as possible and should expose their bodies to the air as much as possible.

The second important element in the preservation of health is water. As soon as we get up from bed we should drink one or two glasses of water, which helps the evacuation of the bowels. A cup of hot water half an hour before meals helps much to keep up good health. A cold bath is also important, and that also should be taken in the morning. After the bath the body should be rubbed well with a towel.

The third most important element in the preservation of health is sunlight. Sunlight is most essential for the growth of both the plant and the animal kingdom. Those plants and trees which do not get enough sunlight become stunted in growth. If we expose our bodies to the rays of the morning sun we gain much vitality from the sunlight. There should be enough light in places of work. The doors

and windows should be kept open to allow the sunlight to enter. Even in winter the doors and windows should be kept open and we should protect our bodies with enough clothes.

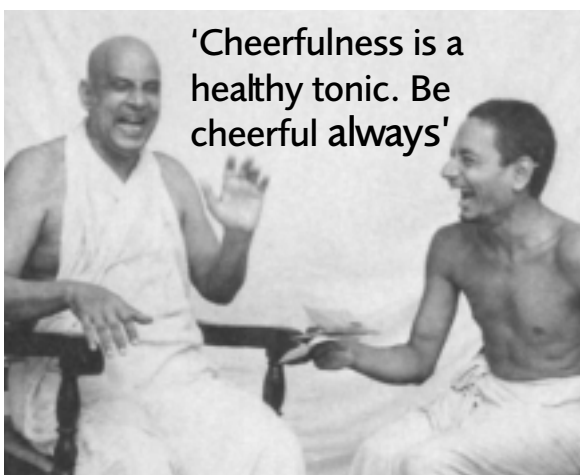
The fourth important factor is food.

Though we boast ourselves to be civilised men, when the question of food comes we make many imperceptible blunders. Food is a substance, which builds up or repairs tissues and supplies material for the production of heat and energy. The right kind of food is most important. Half the illness of the nation is due to an ill-balanced diet. Unwholesome, stale food produces irritating poisons in the blood, which cause various kinds of disorders. The liver and the kidneys are taxed by high and luxurious living. Rich people who lead a life of dissipation suffer from organic diseases of the liver and kidneys. They have to pay a heavy penalty because they have violated the laws of nature and the laws of health. Drinking alcohol affects the liver. Eating meat, beef, etc affects the kidneys. Nature puts a check on the man who violates her laws by inducing chronic structural diseases of the vital organs. This is the punishment by Mother Nature on her impertinent children who transgress her law.

Without food you cannot live, but you eat more than you need. You season the foodstuff with spices which harm the stomach and intestines. As all palatable food is tempting, man takes more food than is actually necessary for the upkeep of the body. He eats three times as much as is necessary to keep him well. He unduly overloads his stomach. He loses control over the tongue and the power of discrimination when he sits in front of tempting dishes. He says "I must eat to my heart's content today. It does not matter even if I load my stomach and suffer from dyspepsia. I will take a strong purgative and a dose of some carminative mixture in the morning." How powerful is the tongue! More people die of over-eating than of under-eating. You press your friends to eat some extra sweets even after a full sumptuous meal. Mothers overfeed their children. Women waste their time, energy and money in preparing different varieties of palatable dishes. They try to exhibit their utmost skill in presenting diverse tasty dishes. But, after all, man wants very little on this earth.

The most natural food of man is green vegetables, fruits, roots and milk, i.e.

uncooked food. Fruits and vegetables which are sun-cooked are the elixir of life and are nature's remedies. Animals living on sun-cooked food have more strength and seldom fall sick. The animals that live on grass, green leaves, fruits and roots are stronger than man. The cooking of foods takes away many vital elements from the food and so we cannot get the needed vitality from the foods which are conventionally cooked.



'Cheerfulness is a healthy tonic. Be cheerful always'

Above – Swami Sivananda shares a joke with Swami Venkatesananda

Since ages men have been accustomed to cooked foods and it becomes difficult to change the old habits all of a sudden. So the golden mean is to take one meal as usual and the next meal should consist of milk and fruits only.

We should not discard our usual meal in the morning, but avoid fried and spiced food and sweets as much as possible.

This alone is not sufficient. There is also the necessity of avoiding unwholesome foods. Tea, coffee, and other stimulants should be avoided as far as possible. In the afternoon, instead of tea or coffee, we can take one or two fruits available in the season. Abstinence from alcohol, cold drinks and other beverages is also necessary.

On one day once a week we should have two meals of fruits, milk and vegetables only. Our evening meal should consist mainly of fruits and vegetables and milk. It should be finished before 7 or 8pm.

Occasional fasts to correct our errors against natural life are as essential as occasional

feasts which are often inevitable. An occasional use of enema or castor oil or any vegetable laxative is necessary to clean the bowels when we feel constipated.

The practice of going to bed early and rising in the early morning is also most essential. Working till late hours at night should be avoided as far as practicable. We should go to bed between 10 and 11pm.

Celibacy is also necessary for maintaining radiant health. One who practises celibacy is free from diseases. He is healthy and attains longevity.

All excesses in enjoyment should be avoided. Too much cinema going is also a sin against health and nature.

It is the mind which controls the body, so we should try to keep cheerful under all circumstances. A strong mind helps much to ward off ill health; not only this, but it aids us in preserving good health and effecting a speedy cure. It is the mind which creates heaven or hell, so we should always try to keep cheerful at all times.

An ordinary man cannot change the circumstances or affect a revolution. He must adapt himself to the circumstances. Knowing that they are not under our control, it is our duty to struggle hard against them with a hope of success, which is slow but sure if our attempts are in the right direction. We should not entertain pessimistic thoughts. God is always good. The apparent difficulties which we have to face in life are for our progress, and we must pray to God to find out means and measures to overcome them.

Before going to bed we must bring the image of our favourite deity before our mind's eye and pray to God fervently to give us health, wealth and power to fight the battle of life successfully.

It has been found that with all the possible means of enjoyment man is losing his natural power of enjoyment. With natural methods of living the health of the past generation was very good. Now with all possible conveniences the health of the present generation is very delicate.

The present advance in modern civilisation has made life expensive. The majority of people do not get nourishing food. The tendency towards self-appeasement and exorbitant profits has induced manufacturers to resort to unlawful and unjust means for their personal gain. Machinery has made a very few excessively rich. The only way out of this chaos is to turn towards plain living and high thinking. It will give us a healthy body and a sound mind ■



Above: Take exercise regularly – Swami Sivananda practising asanas in advanced age

LUXURY AND HEALTH

The over-production of luxuries and means of destruction has brought on a crisis. The current of the crisis is so strong that none can check it. The luxuries give a momentary enjoyment, but ultimately they have a very unsalutary effect upon our health.