

THE HYGIENIC SYSTEM, VOL. III

Fasting and Sun Bathing • Herbert M. Shelton

Originally published in 1934, this foundational text of the **Natural Hygiene** movement posits that the body possesses an innate "vital force" capable of healing itself when environmental burdens—primarily food and indoor confinement—are removed.

1. The Philosophy of Natural Hygiene

Shelton argues that disease is not an enemy to be fought, but a **remedial effort** by the body to rid itself of toxemia. He advocates for non-intervention, suggesting that physiological, mental, and physical rest are the only true requirements for recovery.

2. The Mechanics of Fasting

Shelton distinguishes **Fasting** (voluntary abstinence while using stored reserves) from **Starvation** (the exhaustion of those reserves). During a fast, the body enters a state of **Autolysis**—selectively digesting non-essential tissues like tumors, cysts, and fat while preserving vital organs.

3. Clinical Guidelines for the Fast

- **Water Only:** Shelton strictly opposes juice fasting, maintaining that only pure water allows the digestive system to achieve total physiological rest.
- **The Return of Hunger:** A therapeutic fast is concluded only when "true hunger" returns, signaled by a clearing of the tongue and sweetening of the breath.
- **Breaking the Fast:** This must be done meticulously, typically starting with fresh citrus juices to avoid shocking the resting system.

4. Sun Bathing (Heliotherapy)

Shelton views sunlight as an essential nutrient. He argues that modern clothing and indoor living "starve" the nervous system. Heliotherapy is credited with:

- Stimulating calcium metabolism and endocrine function.
- Increasing red blood cell production.
- Improving overall vital resistance, provided exposure is gradual and controlled to avoid toxic sunburn.

THE ULTIMATE TAKEAWAY: Health cannot be found in a bottle. By stepping back from food and reconnecting with natural elements like sunlight, the body is liberated from internal toxins, allowing its self-healing architecture to repair functional disorders.