

Far-Infrared Rays and Healing

Far-infrared rays (FIRs) are the portion of the light spectrum that are invisible to the naked eye. Most of the FIRs on earth come from the sun. And although we can't see these rays, we can certainly feel them on a daily basis in the form of heat. The human body not only receives FIRs, it radiates them as well.

Everything in the universe vibrates at its own frequency, which causes a transfer of energy from one substance to another. Like most living things, our bodies consist primarily of water and protein. We easily absorb energy from the FIRs coming from the sun because our vibration frequency is of the same wavelength. When these FIRs penetrate the skin into the deeper tissues, cellular vibration speeds up, creating internal heat. FIRs transform from light energy into heat, or thermal, energy.

A good example of this process is the difference you feel standing outside on a cool and cloudy day. Although the air temperature remains exactly the same, when the sun breaks through you instantly feel a deeper inner-warmth as these far-infrared light rays penetrate the skin and transform into thermal energy.

~~This phenomenon also explains why in the winter we~~ feel perfectly comfortable wearing a sweater when the room temperature is at 70 degrees, and in the summer we feel comfortable in short sleeves with the same room temperature of 70 degrees. The reason: Although the temperature is the same, the walls and the ceiling radiate more FIR waves in the summer—waves that heat our bodies, from the inside out.

The thermal effects within the deeper layers of tissue cause the blood vessels and capillaries to dilate, promoting increased circulation and removing metabolic waste and toxins through sweating. Vibrating water molecules become more "active" as they are ionized into hydrogen and hydroxide ions that release gases and other toxic materials. Cell mitochondria also increase energy production, thereby raising the metabolic rate.

It's easy to see just how beneficial far infrared waves are to our health and why life on earth is so dependent upon the sun. It doesn't just warm the body, it activates many essential body functions as well.

In just the last decade, the Japanese have been on the forefront of developing a long list of far-infrared devices. They've been granted dozens of patents on FIR products that can be used in healing, cooking, drying, and heating. Hundreds of items are already on the market

in Japan including everything from FIR ranges and ovens to FIR socks, hair dryers, and clinical treatment devices.

Based on what I've seen happening in Japan, I think in the next few years we'll start to see more treatment programs and therapies employing far-infrared devices.

One of the most interesting and useful detoxification tools available is the far-infrared sauna, which interacts with the unique properties of our skin. It doesn't require prescription medications, IVs, or any invasive procedures.

FIR Saunas: Better By Far

I've used wood-fired, electric element, and infrared saunas. After reading the above, it should come as no surprise that infrared saunas are by far the most effective for several reasons.

Since these saunas heat your body "from the inside out," the air temperature inside a FIR sauna can be 60 to 80 degrees lower than in conventional saunas, but your sweat volume will be 2 to 3 times higher. It's far more comfortable to stay in a FIR sauna and much easier to breathe because the air isn't as hot. This also makes it safer to use for individuals prone to heat stroke, as well as for asthmatics, heart patients, and the elderly.

By penetrating the deeper tissues, the detoxifying effect of FIR saunas is significantly increased. In a conventional sauna it has been estimated that one's sweat contains roughly 2 percent toxins and 98 percent water. In FIR saunas, that ratio increases to an amazing 20 percent toxins and 80 percent water.

Exposure to FIRs has profound effects throughout the body and enables you to experience benefits impossible to achieve with conventional saunas. Studies have shown that just 30 minutes in a far-infrared sauna increases the metabolic rate to such a degree that you can burn anywhere from 200 to 600 calories and realize an increase in blood flow from the normal 5 to 7 quarts a minute to as much as 13 quarts. From a cardiovascular standpoint, it's like exercising without the effort. (*JAMA* 81;246:623)

An unpublished study, conducted by the University of Missouri, found that regular FIR sauna use helped in lowering blood pressure. Other studies have found that FIRs inhibit the growth of breast cancer tumors in mice and may prove to be a non-invasive method of treating certain cancers. (*Anticancer Res* 99;May-June 19(3A):1797-1800) (*Anticancer Res* 99;Sept-Oct;19(5B):4125-4130)

A Japanese study discovered that far-infrared therapy improved lactation in 75 percent of women experiencing difficulty in breast-feeding, enabling half of these women to continue breast-feeding until weaning. Interestingly, the source of the FIRs was a ceramic disc given to the women to wear. (*Ann Physiol Anthropol* 90;9:83-91)

FIRs can also increase the circulation of blood in bone by as much as 80 percent, which would be beneficial in the healing of fractures and other problems. (*Kobe J Med Sci* 99;45:27-39) Furthermore, it improves sleep patterns in both animals and humans and could be used safely to treat insomnia and other sleep disorders. (*Int J Biometeorol* 89;33:145-150)

The far-infrared sauna with the most research and testing is one manufactured by a company called Sunlight Saunas in Overland Park, Kansas. If you are fortunate enough to live in that area, they offer sauna sessions at their facility. They also sell their units all over the world. In fact, their saunas are used by more doctors and detox facilities than any other.

Sunlight Saunas use a far-infrared heating system called the solocarbon, which is one of the most efficient ever developed. The human body radiates heat in the range of 3 to 50 microns, but hovers primarily at 9.4 microns. This solocarbon heater emits heat at 7 to 14 microns with 95 percent efficiency. This probably sounds like a lot of technical jargon but, for practical purposes, it really means these saunas are by far the most efficient at emitting far-infrared rays at the precise frequency needed by the human body.

I've tried dozens of different saunas, but the Sunlight Saunas are without a doubt the best on the market. I particularly like their Signature Series. They are the only company I'm aware of that offers a lifetime warranty on everything (including the solocarbon heaters). If you're in the market for a sauna, this is the one to have. It will be the last sauna you'll ever have to purchase. I can't recommend them highly enough.

For more information you can check out their Web site at www.sunlightsaunas.com or call them at

877-292-0020. If you have a chance to visit, they are at 7373 West 107th Street, Overland, Kansas 66212.

Back to the Future

Our ancestors instinctively knew about and used far-infrared therapy through the use of clay and sun bathing (see "A Down Payment on Your Health" on p. 137). Now, the benefits from clay haven't changed in thousands of years and are slowly being "re-discovered," and new technology allows us to enhance our exposure to FIRs with products like far-infrared saunas. They safely provide many of the same benefits as the sun without the risk of over-exposure.

We are constantly being bathed in far-infrared waves. They sustain life as we know it on earth. Using FIRs to improve your overall health is about as basic as it gets. Earlier I mentioned that we not only receive far-infrared rays, but we emit them as well. The palms of our hands emit far-infrared rays in the range of 8 to 14 microns. This is definitely one of the basic factors involved in "healing touch" and "hands-on" therapies like chiropractic, acupuncture, and massage.

Some people seem to have more of this healing "touch" and you can feel them "giving" you energy when they're around. Pets emit this energy and close associations with their owners has been shown to increase one's longevity. (And then there are those who obviously drain your energy just by their presence.)

I'm also sure you've also seen the reports showing that married individuals who sleep together live longer lives. In addition to the supportive emotional factors, when you're sleeping next to someone, each body acts as both a transmitter and a receiver of healing far-infrared waves.

These are just more good reasons to enjoy the company of loved ones, count your blessings, and enjoy the holiday season.

Take care,

Dr. David Williams

If you have questions or comments for Dr. Williams, please send them to the mail or e-mail addresses listed to the right. Of course, practical and ethical constraints prevent him from answering personal medical questions by mail or e-mail, but he'll answer as many as he can in the Mailbox section of *Alternatives*. For our part, we'll do our best to direct you to his issues, reports, and products related to the subject of your interest.

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