

7 days for your own good

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Is your chest starting to feel as tight as most of your clothes? We all tell ourselves we should do this and we should do that... but for some strange reason we find it very hard to start 'punishing' ourselves. Which is why, perhaps, we should start letting others do it for us...

Since the spring, men and women of all ages have had the chance to take their bodies and their health in general to task without the complexes that normally come with it: the Baltic Sea Diet Cure, exclusively offered on the Estonian spa market by Spa Estonia in Pärnu. Kodutohter decided to check it out...

What is the Baltic Sea Diet Cure?

The week-long Baltic Sea Diet Cure is based on the methodology of Dr. Natalia Trofimova, the founder of the Tartu Bioclinic and the naturopathy centre on the outskirts of the university city, which has its roots in the seven core principles of harmonious living: a balanced diet, colour therapy, exercise, nature, health, water and well-being & balance.

The diet cure aims to restore balance to the metabolism and give people a little bit of extra energy for their everyday lives. The package is designed to return your weight to within the norms, increase your physical activity, stave off illness, slow the aging process, reduce stress, achieve harmony between body, mind and soul and, needless to say, encourage you to carry on this healthy new lifestyle once the week is over.

You are what you eat

As soon as I'd settled in to my room in the spa's Green Wing, I set off to be weighed, have my waistline and blood pressure measured and have my body mass index and fat percentage recorded. I am informed of the amount of calories I should be consuming on a daily basis for it to have a positive effect on my health, and given a personal Harmony Journal, in which all of my measurements are to be recorded during the course of the cure. (They are taken repeatedly.) The journal

is also designed, I discover, to record not only your thoughts and feelings about your body and the way you're feeling over the seven days of the diet, but also to confess your sins - the extracurricular sipping and supping you've been doing - so that later you can reflect on your transgressions and call yourself to order. Which is something I will clearly have to do. As I head off to eat I've no need to keep track of the calories, since the portions of food that are placed in front of me have been especially designed to suit my needs.

The menus you are served up through

out the week are based on the principle of healthy eating - variety and moderation. It's a principle worth following even once the week is out.

The meals I am served turn out to be as tasty as they appear, and are at times so surprising (in a good way) that I am at a loss for words: take the beetroot and blueberry soup, for example; or the beetroot, sauerkraut and herring salad. At breakfast we even get freshly squeezed juice, and can take herb tea and snack on fruit quite literally to our heart's content. Since water plays such an important part in the diet - you're asked to drink between 1.5 and 2 litres every day - a large bottle of it awaits me on the breakfast table. Afterwards I feel

The menus follow the golden rule of healthy eating: variety and moderation.





so good, and indeed so light, that I'm ready to take on a spot of exercise...

Tracksuits and swimsuits

There is no shortage of health-giving hurly-burly during the day. Refreshing early morning aerobics is swiftly followed by Nordic walking, led by an instructor. Although I'm an avid walker in real life, striding along in this manner, ski poles in hand, is not something I've done before. Nevertheless, I realise that the walking bit is the point after all; the ski poles simply force you to keep up the pace (which is to say the right pulse rate to burn calories). Of course, you're also given a step counter, as soon as you arrive.

I'm suddenly struck by the idea that I should get some of this stuff for myself. I work out on the equipment in the gym, toning myself, stretching my muscles with the medicine ball and following the orders given to me in the pool by the water aerobics instructor.

In the course of my personal consultation I am informed of the other procedures I should undergo while on the diet cure. These procedures, I am told, are assigned on the basis of individual needs. As such, I am sent to the relaxation chamber and booked in for a cellulite massage.

The latter is entirely hands-on, with nothing battery-operated or with a power cord involved. The masseur is skilled and thorough, and afterwards it feels like my body - made stiff and inflexible from years sat in front of a computer - has truly had life returned to it. Pleasantly exhausted from such a healthy day, I spend a relaxing evening splashing about in the spa's pool and sauna complex.

The surprises your body holds in store

No diet cure would really be worthy of the name without blood tests, and I

am informed of my blood sugar and cholesterol levels. To my surprise, I discover that my blood has also been given a complete Cytotoxic Test™ - an individual screening testing your tolerance to 60 different foodstuffs. Based on the results, the doctor gives me a list of things which could produce something of a reaction in my body. Now I know what I can and can't eat, and which foods I should keep my eye on. Along with the test I'm given personalised nutrition recommendations which I will need to take into account when choosing what I eat.

Everyone who cares about their health knows only too well how important eating the right kinds of food is. But since everyone's bodies are different, you sometimes find yourself wondering: am I really eating what I should be eating? And that little dilemma is what the food tolerance test is designed to help sort out.

If the test shows that you're hypersensitive to a particular food, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to give it up for life. Once you've been following the diet for a while, your body's balance returns to normal. For example, if you register only a slight sensitivity to something, you only need to stay off it for a little while; but if you register a stronger reaction to something, you should avoid it for a longer period.

"There are no one-size-fits-all rules with nutrition any more," explains Dr. Trofimova. "The recommendations you give people have to be tailored specifically to them, and no one else. People on diets might restrict their intake of

The diet package includes beauty treatments and procedures and daily exercise.

The Baltic Sea Diet Cure package is only available from Spa Estonia two weeks each month, and numbers are strictly limited. The package starts on Sunday and ends on the following Saturday.

calories, but if they're eating things that their body won't tolerate, they won't lose any weight."

Try it and see

By the end of the week I have grown to like the Baltic Sea Diet Cure rather a lot, and it seems to have worked. The benefits are obvious: I've taken a much-needed break from my hamster-in-wheel routine; I've shed a couple of kilos I can quite happily do without; my eyes have been opened to the current state of my health; and I've learnt a thing or two I'll be bearing in mind from here on in if I want to stay healthy. What's more, I feel invigorated by it all, and it seems as though the boost it's given me will last quite a while.

See also www.spaestonia.ee For information and reservations ☎ +372 447 6905 or e-mail sales@spaestonia.ee

