

# Dehydrophobia

By Christine Conners

## *Dehydrophobia: the irrational and debilitating fear of dehydrating your food*

This phobia came to my attention after the publication of *Lipsmackin' Backpackin'*. This book, designed for long-distance backpackers, regularly called for the use of a dehydrator. Despite the book's popularity, a few readers had an oddly negative reaction to the suggestion of drying their food.

Their reaction was so extreme that I, a trained psychotherapist, couldn't help but wonder if there wasn't something more insidious lying beneath the surface. What would cause this reaction? A childhood incident? A genetic disorder? A bad case of giardia? More importantly, what would Freud say?

And then one day it came to me: These people were consumed by a fear so debilitating that it might forever keep them from discovering the joys of dehydration.

If you are suffering from dehydrophobia, take heart. By following my four-week program, you can beat this.

### Week 1 - Educate yourself

- **What is a dehydrator?** Its purpose is to dry your food in a slow, even fashion. This isn't uncharted territory; people have been drying food for hundreds of years.
- **Will it burn down my house?** Your dehydrator does not want to kill you. Your dehydrator shouldn't get hot enough to even burn your food, much less your house.
- **I'm an important person. Why should I waste my time dehydrating?** Dehydration preserves the taste of your food, extends its shelf life, reduces weight, saves money and allows you to enjoy many of the meals you enjoy at home on the trail.
- **Do dehydrators come in fashion colors?** Sorry. No.

### Week 2 – Positive affirmations

- Begin with a deep cleansing breath. Inhale. Exhale. Now repeat the following affirmations: My dehydrator is my friend. I like to dehydrate. My dehydrator loves me.

### Week 3 – Bonding

- When your dehydrator arrives, ask the mailman to place it in your kitchen. Each day as you walk past it, repeat your affirmations while slowly moving closer to it. On the last day of week three, take a deep cleansing breath and touch the box.

### Week 4 - Dehydrating

- Find yourself a support buddy. Together remove the dehydrator from the box. If you feel panicky, repeat your affirmations. Pour yourself a hot bubble bath and read your dehydrator instructions. (This can be done with or without your support buddy.)
- Now plug in your dehydrator and carefully place one pea on a dehydrator tray. Close the door and turn it on and sit back with a cup of herbal tea. Assure yourself that your pea is doing fine. It's not in pain, it's just losing a little water. Try not to over-identify with your pea. Remember: Peas are not people, they are just peas. Repeat your affirmations as necessary.
- After several hours remove your pea. Study it. Touch it. Talk to it. Place it in a pot with a little boiling water and watch it return to life. Your pea is alive again. Everything is going to be OK.
- Now move onto other things. Dry a whole bag of peas. Dry a jar of spaghetti sauce. For a special treat dry your kid's peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Be creative. Remember: your dehydrator is your friend.



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