

# **Introductory Guide To Hydrotherapy**

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# Hydrotherapy

## *Introduction to hydrotherapy*

Hydrotherapy is a form of natural healing therapy which builds on the belief in the healing properties of water.

Hydrotherapy uses water to treat diseases in the body and to ease the symptoms of a variety of ailments.

The term or hydrotherapy encompasses a broad range of methods that take advantage of the physical properties of water, such as the temperature and the pressure, for therapeutic purposes, such as stimulating the blood circulation and treating the symptoms of certain diseases.

Hydrotherapy may involve the use of hot or cold packs, wet or dry bandages, emersion in cold baths or sitting in a steam room or sauna. All with the intention of generating cooling or sweating of the body to dilate or constrict the blood vessels and stimulate the proper flow of bold and lymph in the vessels.

## *Brief history of hydrotherapy*

The use of water for therapy has been around for hundreds of years, as far back as the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Egyptian royalty bathed in baths complimented with essential oils and flowers, while the Roman upper class had communal public baths.

### *Ancient Roman communal bath*



China and Japan are amongst other cultures noted for having a long history of hydrotherapy use for treating illness.

Vincent Preissnitz, the son of a peasant farmer, as a young child observed a wounded deer bathing its wound in a pond near his home. Over the course of several days, he observed this deer return and eventually the wound was healed.

Later as a teenager, Preissnitz was attending to a horse cart, when the cart ran him over, breaking three of his ribs. A physician told him that they would never heal. Preissnitz decided to try his own hand at healing himself. He wrapped his wounds with damp bandages and daily changed his bandages while drinking large quantities of water. After about a year, his broken ribs had been cured.

Hydropathy represented a return to a treatment that was spiritual and natural, while making it more palatable to those who felt uncomfortable with the direction that traditional medicine was taking.

*Vincent Preissnitz*



## *The thinking behind hydrotherapy*

The thinking behind hydropathy branches out into two areas. One focuses on the healing properties of water which is a more spiritual aspect of the therapy and the other focuses on the use of water of extreme temperature, either extremely hot or extremely cold, and water pressure, to stimulate the flow of blood or lymph in the body by either dilating or constricting the blood vessels.

### *The healing properties of water*

The water in our body makes up over 50% of the human physical form. This water may become contaminated by our negative or limiting thoughts and this will result in a variety of illness or disease in the physical body.

**Dr. Masaru Emoto** a Japanese scientist who is one of the most important water researchers the world has known, revolutionized the idea that our thoughts and intentions impact the physical realm and therefore the physical body.

He became interested in the life energy in water and began to investigate the crystallization patterns within water samples collected from pure and polluted sources.

He discovered how intentions, words, and music, affect the molecular structure of water.

Using high-speed photography, Dr. Emoto discovered that crystals formed in frozen water reveal changes when exposed to human thoughts and emotions.

He theorized that human consciousness could affect the molecular structure of water both externally and within the body.

Consistently, the water exposed to positive, loving words or images of beauty produced brilliant, complex, and colorful snowflake crystals with hexagonal sixfold symmetry like those produced by water from healthy, clean, flowing rivers and springs.

Conversely, the water exposed to negative, disempowering words or sad, ugly images consistently produced fractured crystals or distorted, discolored blobs with no crystalline structure at all, much like water from stagnate or polluted sources of water.

His work powerfully and eloquently shows us how our thoughts, words, and intentions, have a literal and direct effect on our physical world and our overall state of health and wellbeing.



### *Water crystals photographed by Dr. Emoto*



### *The use of water temperature and pressure*

The thinking behind using water of various temperature to stimulate healing in the body focuses on the impact of the extreme temperature on the blood vessels and how this either increases blood flow and loss of bodily fluid or restricts blood flow and promotes increase oxygen intake and hormone release.

Many illness and diseases in the body will results in abnormal blood clotting and build up in various areas of the blood vessels, affecting the related muscles and tissues. Temperatures of 90 degrees or above, dilates the blood vessels which allows for increased blood flow to the dilate the blood vessels. This will stimulate the proper flow of blood, casing an easing of the symptoms of illness or disease.

In addition to increased blood flow, extreme heat will result in increased sweating. The body will loss water which may contain the impurities which cause illness in the body.

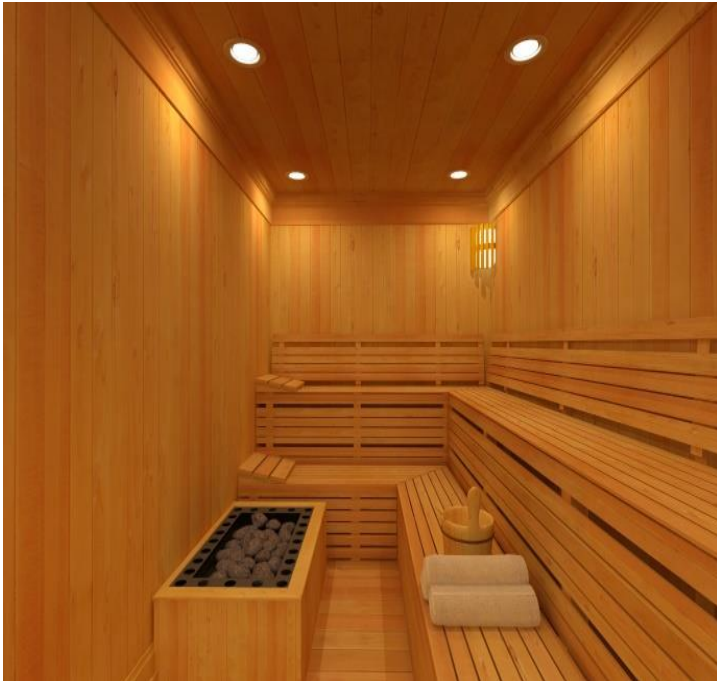
Cooling the body, using extremely cold temperature of close to 0 degrees, causes blood vessels to tighten and results in reduce blood flow and constricts the blood supply in the outer regions such as the end of our limbs.

When the blood flow is reduced, several defence mechanisms kick in. The hypothalamus gland in the brain responds to signals from nerve endings and releases hormones in an effort to regulate the core body temperature and keep the vital organs warm and stimulate specific cells or tissues into action.

The body will need to consume more oxygen and pump more blood around the vital organs to keep warm, so the heart speeds up in order to meet this demand.

## *How to perform a hydrotherapy treatment*

*Steam room or sauna*



*Ice bath*



A cold hydrotherapy treatment should be done under the close supervision of a qualified hydro therapist.

Cold hydrotherapy treatments involves submerging all or part of the body, except the head, into freezing water for a short period at a time of between 10 to 20 minutes.

This is done mainly using ice cubes in a tub of water.

It can be done at any time of the day. But it recommended that it be done in the morning or afternoon.

During a hydrotherapy treatment the head is not submerged

A hot hydrotherapy is done either by being submerged in a hot bath of above 42 degrees or sitting in a steam room or sauna for a period of time.

The client should remain in the steam room for about 10 to 20 minutes unless they are unable to handle it.

**Fomentation** is the application of a wet heated cloth to the body to relieve pain in the area. It can be applied to the spine, chest, liver, or bowels for intervals of three minutes until the pain is alleviated.

**Hot foot bath** involves soaking the foot to above the ankles in a tub of water of about 42 degree for about twenty minutes. This helps relieve headaches and in the treatment of inflammation of pelvic organs.

**A cold compress** is the application of a cold cloth around the neck. This treatment can be used to treat sore throat or laryngitis.

## *Benefits of hydrotherapy*

Hydrotherapy increases your blood circulation. More blood flow means more nutrients are available to help cells regenerate and speed the healing process.

Hydrotherapy improved heart function. When a person is immersed in warm water, the heart is working harder and more efficiently, similar to how it benefits from exercise.

Hydrotherapy can improve sleep and help those suffering from insomnia by relaxing the muscle and mind and relieve from migraines.

Hydrotherapy provides relief from stress, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Warm water immersion provides a safe, relaxing way to unwind, reduce anxiety, and cope more effectively with the challenges of daily life.

Hydrotherapy may result in improved skin condition as toxins are released during a steam treatment.

Hydrotherapy in a steam bath, provided instant relief from flu symptoms.

Hydrotherapy provided relief from muscle and joint pain. The increase in blood circulation helps remove pain-causing chemicals that build up in tissues. As a result, muscle pain goes away faster and the inflammatory response is reduced. The buoyancy of water acts as a buffer against the effects of gravity on an injured joint.

Hydrotherapy helps burn body fat. When the ice water touched the body, the body will make the mechanism automatically to generate heat in order to combat the cold. Namely to make your metabolism work faster. That is, the body will burn carbohydrates and fat reserves more quickly to make you feel warm.



## *The Limitation of hydrotherapy treatments*

One of the most dangerous impacts of an ice water bath is it resulting in potential hypothermia. Hypothermia is a dangerous drop in the body's temperature below the natural 35 degree celsius temperature. If this happens the hypothalamus works harder and may become overcome by the freezing temperatures. This may result in the stoppage of the heart.

Cold bath may cause pain in the nerves and joint and result in arthritis. As the blood vessels constrict in cold temperature, oxygen intake to the vital organs will also be reduced so that it can cause pain and malfunction.

If the body is exposed to drastic cold for a prolonged period, the function of the hypothalamus can affect the thinking process and cause brain damage.

As with many non-evasive and nonchemical treatment, hydrotherapy is viewed with scepticism and considered pseudo-science with no real empirical evidence to substantiate its effectiveness in curing illness and healing the physical body.

Compared to traditional medicine which deals with the symptoms of illness and disease, hydrotherapy as do other natural healing therapies, deals with the actual problem, however it still does not deal with cause of the problem which the thought pattern of the individual.

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Much love and gratitude from me.

Joyce



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