



Contrast Hydrotherapy

Contrast hydrotherapy is a simple technique used to increase circulation throughout the body, promote detoxification and strengthen the immune system. It is especially effective as part of a daily shower to help energize your body.

The contrasting application of hot and cold creates a pumping action that moves blood through the body. This increase in circulation brings nutrients, oxygen and immune cells to stressed and damaged tissues; at the same time metabolic wastes, inflammatory by-products and other toxins are carried away.

Procedure

1. At the end of your shower turn the water temperature to cold for 1 minute.
2. Next switch the water temperature to hot for 3 minutes; then cold for 1 minute (this is one cycle).
3. Repeat for 3 cycles.
4. Always finish with cold water.

Tips

- Treatment types – for a general (whole body) treatment, direct the stream of water towards your back; for treating specific areas of the body (e.g. sore joints), focus the stream of water on that area
- Stream of water – it is more beneficial to use a strong stream of water; hand held showerheads are ideal for contrast hydrotherapy
- 1 cycle = 3 parts hot water + 1 part cold water (e.g. 3 minutes hot water + 1 minute cold water)
- Start slowly – for the first few days simply end your regular shower with a cooler spray; add cycles as your body adapts to the treatments
- Gradually intensify – start off by using water slightly cooler and slightly warmer than your regular shower temperature; steadily work your way to hotter and cooler waters (increased therapeutic benefits are experienced with sharper contrast in temperatures)

Cautions

Ensure to consult your naturopathic doctor before beginning any new treatments.

Adverse effects such as dizziness, light-headedness, nausea or feeling chilled occur when the treatment is too intense. Decrease the contrast of water temperatures and reduce the number of cycles to resolve this issue.

Do not perform this treatment if you have any heart and vascular issues (including heart disease, hypertension, intermittent claudication, weak connective tissue, vascular insufficiency or stasis, blood clots, deep vein thrombosis, phlebitis, and Raynaud's), asthma or diabetes, unless instructed to by your naturopathic doctor.

Do not perform this treatment if you are pregnant or menstruating.