

Hydrotherapies to Support Health in Diabetes

BATHING HYDROTHERAPY

Ending showers or baths with 30-60 seconds of **cold water**. Gradually decrease the temperature and increase the duration over time to tolerance. Order of exposure, **heat** first and **cold** last, is important. Does not need to feel freezing cold. Try taking a deep breath before switching to cold. Rebound effect of brief cold exposure is the stimulation of circulation and metabolism. Long exposures to heat or cold can have a depressive effect.

Supports: circulation, immune function, energy.

Relieves: fatigue, stagnation.

Cautions: peripheral neuropathy, Raynaud's syndrome, cardiac disease.

CONSTITUTIONAL HYDROTHERAPY

Contrast **hot** (5 min) followed by **cold** (10 min) towel compresses to the upper body (chest, abdomen, back), covered by a dry towel and blanket wrap. Wring out towels well so they don't drip. Important for the **cold** towels to cover a somewhat smaller area than the **hot** towels, and to be warmed by the body before proceeding to the next round. Brief **hot** towel refresh before **cold** towels. Treatments are highly adjustable to suit different needs. Sine wave is optional, a low frequency alternating current with low voltage and low amplitude.

Supports: circulation, metabolism, immune system, gastrointestinal and respiratory systems, assimilation, elimination, energy.

Relieves: stress, insomnia, fatigue, high blood pressure, symptoms of infectious disease, congestion, digestive complaints, dysmenorrhea, inflammation.

Cautions: acute bladder infection, acute asthma, hemorrhage, medications that are immunosuppressive; sine wave has many more cautions.

WARMING SOCKS

Warm feet in a bath or foot soak for 5-10 minutes and dry thoroughly. Soak a pair of cotton socks that cover ankles with **cold** water and wring them out. Put on **cold** wet socks followed by a pair of dry thick wool socks. Lie in bed and cover up. Socks can stay on overnight or be removed after they become warmed or dry. Wearing cold wet socks to bed initially stimulates the body and increases circulation towards the feet, thereby relieving congestion from the upper body and producing a relaxing effect. Great for bedtime.

Supports: immune and respiratory systems.

Relieves: congestion, cough, sore throat, flu, URI, headache, stress, insomnia.

Handout compiled and created by Nikolajs Belikoff-Strads, ND, MS.

Provided by Julia Hanfling, RD, CDE for The Hawthorne Diabetes Group.

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Cautions: foot ulcers, walking with wet socks on.

NEUTRAL BATH

Non-thermic hydrotherapy with whole-body immersion in water near **92-97 F** similar to the water temperature of floatation. Initially should feel between comfortably warm and neither warm nor cold. Cover any exposed parts to prevent chill. Relaxed environment with dim lighting. Dry gently without too much friction as that can be too stimulating.

Supports: nervous system, circulation, kidney function, relaxation, sleep.

Relieves: insomnia, anxiety, depression, stress, exhaustion, pain, fever, congestion, acute high blood pressure, peripheral edema, drug withdrawal symptoms.

Cautions: eczema and skin conditions, great cardiac weakness.

FLOATATION

Dark, quiet, weightless, 60-90 minute experience in a tank, pool or pod lying in **neutral** water near **94 F** saturated with Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate). Pools are open, spacious, and better suited to claustrophobia. Tanks are insulated with latching doors and enough space to stretch or stand. Pods are the smallest enclosed space. Remove contacts and insert earplugs. Take a **neutral** temperature pre-shower. Have a facecloth handy in the float to protect face from water. Gentle music signals end. Post-shower to wash off salt and rinse ears with vinegar solution. Move cautiously after floating, floors may be slippery.

Supports: relaxation, meditation, circulation, sleep, focus, creativity, mood.

Relieves: stress, pain, fatigue, insomnia, high blood pressure, headache, PTSD, ADHD, mild to moderate anxiety, mood disorders, muscle soreness.

Cautions: allergy, shaving, open cuts or wounds, perforated eardrums, water irritates eyes, severe anxiety, COPD, orthostatic changes, slips, falls.

SAUNA

Dry **heat** exposure in chamber with low humidity (5-30%) adjustable temperature **150-200 F** rounds of 10-20 minutes followed by **cool** water rinses and 5 minute breaks. Sip water during breaks to rehydrate. Traditional saunas include ritual, massage, scrubs and body masks. Far and near infrared saunas produce a similar heating effect with lower temperatures. Hydrate with at least a full glass of water before and after sauna sessions. Remember to end with a **cool** rinse.

Supports: relaxation, circulation, perspiration, elimination, insulin sensitivity, skin.

Relieves: stress, sore muscles, congestion, high blood pressure, inflammatory conditions.

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Cautions: dehydration, unmanaged blood glucose, cardiovascular conditions, pregnancy, fever, children, elderly, medication interactions, menstruation, hemorrhage impaired sweating, orthostatic changes.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Schedule** minimally stressful events around hydrotherapies.
- **Turn off** or silence electronics such as phones.
- **Hydration** – at least half body weight (lbs.) in ounces water per day.
- **Replacement** – additional water intake to replace losses (sweats).
- **Dehydration** – avoid alcohol and caffeine around hydrotherapy.
- **Meal** – plan to eat 60 to 90 minutes before hydrotherapies.
- **Monitor** – vital signs before and after, including temperature, pulse, blood pressure.
- **Monitor** – for signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia, dizziness, shortness of breath, loss of sensation, level of sedation, allergic reactions, feeling chilled.
- **Testing** – temperature of water prior to immersions or towel compress applications.
- **Temperature** – do not exceed 103 F with poorly managed blood glucose.
- **Water purity** – NSF 53 certified filter for at least drinking water, showerhead.
- **Sanitation** – check cleanliness standards being met at hydrotherapy facilities.
- **Exiting** – move slowly, especially when exiting saunas, floats (floors can be slippery).
- **Caution** – particularly with cardiovascular conditions, pregnancy, medication interactions, peripheral neuropathy, acute infections, cancer, children and elderly.
- **Discuss** hydrotherapies with your primary care provider. Adjustments to treatment, medication, and or blood glucose measurements may be indicated.

Hydrotherapy Centers in the Portland Area

SE Portland

Loyly

Swedish sauna, steam room, cold shower, massage.
Swimsuits required during co-ed times.

Float On

Floatation center with 4 types of rooms, kombucha and tea lounge.
Swimsuits not needed, towels, washcloths, robes, toiletries all provided.

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NE Portland

Loyly

Swedish Sauna, massage, cold room.
Swimsuits required during co-ed times.

Fly Dragon

Day spa with sauna, massage, water table, reflexology.

Common Ground Wellness

Sauna, hot tub, massage, chiropractic care, naturopathic care.
Swimsuits optional; women-only, men-only, and trans-only hours available.

Everett House

Sauna, steam room, hot tub, cold tub, float tanks, massage, chiropractic care.
Swimsuits optional; women-only and men-only hours.

Root Whole Body

Infrared sauna with essential oil, yoga.
Clothing required.

SW Portland

NUNM Health Center

Constitutional hydro, hot fomentation, Russian steam cabinet, wet sheet wrap, massage, acupuncture, chiropractic care, naturopathic care.
Many insurance plans accepted. Must be referred by doctor.

NW Portland

The Float Shoppe

Floataction center, massage, acupuncture, counseling.
Swimsuits not needed, towels, washcloths, robes, toiletries provided.

Root Whole Body

Infrared sauna with essential oil, medicinal soak, yoga.
Clothing required in communal areas.

Sante Aesthetics & Wellness

Soaking pool, cool dip pool, steam room, UV light room.
Must be a patient of Sante to access the facility.

Beaverton

Beaverton Jade Sauna

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Korean women's day spa with sauna, steam room, sea salt room, jade sauna room, tonic pools, body scrub, massage, tea chair.

Columbia Gorge

Carson Hot Springs Resort

Mineral water baths, dry sheet wraps, massage, facials, dry sauna.
Day use and overnight stay both available.

