

## **The therapeutic virtues of cold water**

How to relieve pain, reduce inflammation, lose fat and improve your well-being in a drug-free way? Through a simple daily ritual: the cold shower! While it may seem counterintuitive, regular exposure to cold water generates a multitude of benefits for the body and the mind, notably improved circulation, a strengthened immune system, cellular regeneration and increased daily vitality.

### **How does it work ?**

Repeated contact with cold water acts to reduce the excessive inflammation that is often the source of many of our so-called diseases of civilization. In addition, cold stimulates the production of brown adipose tissue, the main function of which is to produce heat.

### **But it sounds like torture!**

Certainly at first, the mammal in us recoils at the idea of voluntarily standing under a cold shower or immersing ourselves in freezing water. That's normal! How to achieve it? Persist and *breathe*. If you have no previous experience with cold showers, start with a regular shower and finish the last 30 seconds with cold water. Over time, gradually lower the temperature and increase the duration so that your body gets used to the cold. At a rate of two to five minutes three times a week, you will reap the benefits.

By incorporating cold showers into your daily routine, you will quickly notice that you are more and more able to handle the cold, and eventually cold showers and even ice baths become something you look forward to!

### **Swimming in cold water**

Whether it's swimming in a river, a lake, or an ocean, this activity is a popular way to reap the benefits of cold exposure. With a little physical and mental preparation, swimming in water at a temperature below 15° C allows you to fully connect with nature and feel the benefits of the cold throughout your body. Always take precautions to be safe and prevent hypothermia: it is important to ask your doctor for advice before embarking on a program of deliberate cold

exposure. Once medically cleared, take the time to learn about the dangers of exposure to cold, so that you don't overestimate yourself. Then acclimatize yourself and remember: never swim alone!

### **Ready for the ice bath?**

To immerse yourself in an ice bath is to test the power of the mind over the body. Staying in water close to the freezing point requires meditative control. By focusing on your breathing you can find a state of calm. A minute or two is enough to reap the benefits. Curiously, when you get out of the water, you don't feel cold but rather warm. Then a feeling of deep calm sets in that lasts for days.

### **In summary**

Controlled and regular contact with cold water is a great way to reduce stress, thus increasing our confidence and our physical and mental capacity to withstand other stresses in the future!

### **To find out more**

Sébastien Zappa, PhD.: *Respire-Aligne: 12 tips for ice-bath newbies*: <https://respire-aligne.com/12-tips-for-ice-bath-newbies/>

The Wim Hof Method - Cold Therapy: <https://www.wimhofmethod.com/>

Mark Harper: *Chill, The cold water swim cure - A Transformative Guide to Renew Your Body and Mind*.

*The Science of Cold Water Swimming*: <https://www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com/science-cold-water>

By Jan-Érik Deadman