

We Recommend Hot and Cold Therapy Jo Francks, M.H.

When my children were younger we were having dinner with some friends who had children the same age and they had an outside hot tub. The kids were soaking in the hot tub and then suddenly they weren't. When we looked for them, we found them rolling around in the snow and laughing. The other mom was a little worried thinking they would catch pneumonia or something. I assured her that this was good therapy and was so good for their circulation.

Through history alternating heat and cold on areas of inflammation or pain has been used extensively. The heat brings the blood and nutrients to the area and helps muscles relax. The cold drives the blood and toxins away and in some cases will reduce inflammation and swelling.

For a sports injury such as a sprained ankle cold treatment is recommended for the first 48 hours. After that alternating heat and cold is recommended. The cold treatment shouldn't be used before a workout and ice shouldn't be applied directly to the skin for very long. Ice can be used as a massage and can be added to water to soak in. A bag of crushed ice or frozen vegetables works well.



Heat therapy is used to relax muscles and increase circulation. It can be applied as a hot water bottle or in a bucket of warm water. A rice bag heated in a microwave has worked very nicely.

Guidelines are to alternate hot and cold up to 10 minutes each for 30 to 40 minutes three times a day ending on cold. This alternating therapy can also be applied while in the shower. Use alternating warm and cold for up to a minute each before changing the heat. Common sense should be used to determine how hot or cold the temperature should be.

Use caution with this therapy for people with high blood pressure or heart disease. Pregnant women shouldn't use prolonged hot and cold therapy. Also, this shouldn't be applied to open wounds.

Of course, we always recommend using other natural treatments as well. For injuries the Complete Tissue and Bone formula can be used internally and as an ointment or fomentation. Some other herbs that can be used for inflammation are turmeric, ginger, cayenne and marshmallow.

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