

## **Benefits of Cold Water Hydrotherapy**

If you've ever spoken or listened to someone who enjoys open water swimming or outdoor dips they will have likely mentioned the 'natural high' they experience that they'll describe as 'unbeatable and addictive', but other than an overall sense of wellbeing, do you know what the other proven benefits are?

### **Improves sleep**

The cold water stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) – which is responsible for repairing your body. This promotes a feeling of relaxation and a sense of content - this should deliver a better night sleep.

### **Improves circulation**

When we are cold, blood rushes to our organs forcing our hearts to work harder by pumping blood through our bodies. This means your organs can function properly and avoid potential sickness and disease as your white blood cells can be transported more efficiently around the body when needed.

### **Improves happiness**

When you immerse yourself in cold water it can make your skin sting and take your breath away, to reduce the stinging sensation your brain releases endorphins, resulting in feeling happier after you return to the shore.

On top of this, exercise through swimming increases adrenaline which increases dopamine production – your 'happy hormone'. A recent scientific report proved that swimming in water of 14 degrees Celsius increases dopamine levels by 250%.

### **Burns calories**

You will burn more calories as your body needs to work harder to stay warm in cold water. The colder the water, the more your body will convert fat to heat to keep your core temperature stable.

### **Boosts immune system**

A recent survey by Czech scientist found that if your body is in cold water for an hour, 3 times a week this increases white blood cells and antioxidant production – this in turn can reduce risk of heart disease and cancer. Perhaps surprising to know that dipping yourself in cold water through winter can actually fight the cold!

### **Relieves pain**

A 2014 study looks at the effects of hydrotherapy on various systems of the body – they found that it decreases tension, fatigue and negative moods.

It relieves pain from those who suffer from Rheumatism – conditions causing chronic, often intermittent pain affected joints or connective tissue. It also relieves pain from those affected by Fibromyalgia – a long term syndrome that causes pain all over the body.

## References

<https://www.swimming.org/openwater/the-health-benefits-of-open-water-swimming/>

<https://www.redbull.com/gb-en/open-water-swimming-science-facts>

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