



NATUROPATHIC
medicine institute

Celebrating the healing power of nature

Hydrotherapy – Contrast Baths

Hydrotherapy is the use of water as a therapeutic agent. Water may be applied to an injury in the form of ice, heat, etc. The specific type of hydrotherapy to be discussed here is called **Contrast Baths**.

Technique:

- Find 2 wash buckets/basins that can easily accommodate your painful body part.
- Fill one basin with very hot water - as hot as you can comfortably tolerate (do not scald)
- Fill the second with ice cold water - as cold as you can tolerate (ice cubes may be necessary)
- Immerse your sore body part into the hot basin for 1-2 minutes
- Immediately transfer into the cold basin and immerse for 30 seconds.
- Repeat dipping for 5-10 transfers.
- End your bath in the cold basin.

Perform this procedure one to two times per day.

The contrast of hot-cold creates a pumping of the blood in and out of the body part. The blood vessels dilate in the heat and constrict in the cold. Any stagnating swelling is reduced as it is pumped out of the body part. Inflammation is reduced as fresh blood and healing agents are pumped into the injured area.

Pain is also reduced due to the anesthetic effects of both the hot and cold temperatures of the water.

References: Dick-Kronenberg, L. (2012). *The ultimate text in constitutional hydrotherapy: A 100-year old tradition of clinical practice*.

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