

Alternating Foot Bath



Alternating hot and cold foot baths involve the immersion of the feet into hot and cold water in an alternating fashion. This treatment will reduce pain locally and in distal parts. It will increase circulation, metabolism, immune function, nutrition, and lymphatic drainage. Additionally, it may help to restore the body's natural ionic charge.

Indications

Alternating hot and cold foot baths are used to treat infections, arthritis, venous stasis ulcers, fractures, edema, and injuries including sprains, strains, and bruises after 24 hours. It's also used to help those who have poor circulation in the lower legs.

Contraindications

Do not use alternating hot and cold foot baths in persons with cancer, vascular disease including uncontrolled diabetes, nerve injury causing diminished sensation, or bleeding.

Caution

Always finish with a short cold bath except in persons with rheumatoid arthritis whose condition is aggravated by cold. End treatment with warm bath in this case.

Supplies

2 basins or tubs for feet (and calves if possible)	Hot water (not scalding)
Bath thermometer	Cold water
Towels	Cold compress for head
Your favourite essential oil (optional)	

Directions

- ☞ Prepare a tub with hot water at 105-110 degrees F. Do not exceed 120 degrees. This temperature is slightly hotter than the average hot tub. Prepare alternate tub with cold water at 45 degrees F.
- ☞ If using essential oil, add this to the hot bin
- ☞ Immerse feet in tub with hot water for 3 minutes.
- ☞ After 3 minutes, change feet to cold foot bath and immerse feet for 30 seconds.
- ☞ Make three complete changes between the hot and cold tubs (3x-hot/3x-cold).
- ☞ Always start the treatment with the hot bath and finish treatment with the cold bath.
- ☞ If you start sweating, place a cold compress on your forehead.
- ☞ Dry feet thoroughly and rest in bed for at least 30 minutes. Doing a quick friction rub on the feet is a great add-on
- ☞ Add hot water to the hot tub if the temperature falls below 105 degrees.
- ☞ The greater the contrast between the hot and cold water, the stronger the treatment.
- ☞ Place disinfectant such as betadine, vinegar, hypericum, or calendula tincture in water if treating an infected wound.

Reference: Boyle, Wade, ND, and Saine, André, ND, Lectures in Naturopathic Hydrotherapy, (East Palastine, OH:Buckeye Naturopathic Press) 1988.