

Hydrotherapy

Overview of Hydrotherapy

Hydrotherapy is simply the use of water (hydro) as a therapy. The use of water in healing dates

back thousands of years. The formal use of "hydrotherapy" is believed to date to the early 1800's when Vincent Priessnitz



(1801-1851) began using water to cure in a more formalized manner.

The healing benefits of hydrotherapy most likely come from the temperature of the water. Sometimes just heat is used, sometime just cold, and sometimes they are alternated

Hydrotherapy is used by many practitioners in many different fields today: physical therapy, sports medicine, Naturopathic Medicine, Chiropractic medicine and more.



Remember the last time you took a long hot soak in the tub?

Types of Hydrotherapy

There are many different types, but here are a few:



A **Sitz Bath** is simply sitting your bottom in cold, warm or hot water, with or without added ingredients like various herbs, Epsom salts, oatmeal and more.



A **Compress** is the application of a warm or cold pack to an injured or inflamed part of the body.

A **Foot bath** is a bath that soaks your feet in cold, warm or hot water, often alternating them.



Constitutional Hydrotherapy is the alternating of hot and cold towels, application of sine wave stimulation and wrapping in warm blankets. Each treatment takes about 45 minutes and can be used for both chronic and acute states. This is a powerful healing modality with a long history in Naturopathic Medicine and many NDs use it often to encourage healing.

Physiology of Constitutional Hydrotherapy

The contrast of hot and 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. Healing is stimulated by changes in circulation to the internal organs. Any stagnating or 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. There are times when this type of therapy should not be done as in Diabetes if there is a loss of sensation or if there has been extensive injury to the skin.

Overall—this is a great therapy for just about everyone and it can really improve overall health!

