

Louise CLARK

FREE
EBOOK



COLD
Shower
BENEFITS

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IMPROVES LYMPHATIC CIRCULATION

The lymphatic system is a network of vessels that run throughout the body, clearing out waste, bacteria and microbes from your cells.

The lymphatic system essentially helps your body cleanse itself.

Look at the lymphatic system to answer the question of “Are cold showers good for you?” Unlike your blood, which is constantly pumped through your body by the heart, your lymph fluid doesn’t have a central pump. Instead, your lymphatic system relies on muscle contraction to pump the lymph fluid through the vessels. So if you don’t exercise or your lymphatic system itself becomes slow or inefficient, the fluid stagnates and toxins build up, manifesting in colds, joint pain, infection and even disease.

Cold water immersion causes your lymph vessels to contract, forcing your lymphatic system to pump lymph fluids throughout your body, flushing the waste out of the area. One of the many cold shower benefits is that they trigger the immune system’s white blood cells, prompting them to attack and destroy any unwanted substance in the fluid. It’s sort of a domino effect – the cold water affects the lymphatic system, which in turn affects the immune system, which ultimately keeps you feeling happy and healthy.

IMPROVES CARDIOVASCULAR CIRCULATION

When we think about cold shower benefits, we rarely think about cardiovascular circulation – but it’s one of the most critical components to our overall health and well-being.

Poor cardiovascular circulation compromises blood flow, thus stressing the heart. This can ultimately lead to health problems like fatigue, headaches, high blood pressure, muscle cramping or even heart attack and stroke.

By improving circulation, we can improve heart health, enhance mental performance, boost the immune system, speed metabolism and develop more strength and energy to live our lives the way we want.

Exercise and diet are two well-known factors in better cardiovascular circulation.

But among the benefits of taking cold showers is the stimulation of blood flow.

When you immerse your body in cold water, the blood rushes to surround your vital organs. Your heart is then forced to pump more efficiently, pushing blood through all your vessels and supplying every part of your body with the oxygen and nutrients it needs. Doing this on a routine basis can help promote healthy blood circulation and a healthy body.

REDUCES MUSCLE INFLAMMATION

Do cold shower benefits extend to your fitness routine? Absolutely.

Have you ever participated in a high-intensity workout and woken up sore the next morning? How about doing a new type of physical activity that left your muscles throbbing?

This physical discomfort is known as delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS), and it can be so painful that those afflicted instantly reach for the anti-inflammatory meds to soothe their pain.

All too often, people can't take the pain that comes with this new or increased movement, and they use it as an excuse to stop their workout routine either temporarily or, in extreme cases, entirely.

The pain of DOMS can be explained this way: any activity that pushes your muscles beyond the limits they are accustomed to – even common household chores, if you're largely sedentary – can lead to microscopic tears in the fibers and inflammation in the tissue.

The tears and inflammation are the cause of the pain you're feeling.

But cold water immersion – along with an alkaline-based diet – has been scientifically proven to help counteract these side effects.

One of the top cold shower benefits is the fact that they lower the damaged tissue's temperature and constricts the blood vessels. This helps reduce any swelling and inflammation, and even numbs the nerve endings, bringing immediate relief. This is why professional athletes soak in an ice bath following a strenuous workout.

But you don't have to be a serious athlete to reap the benefits of taking cold showers. By taking a quick cold water shower after a stint at the gym or some heavy work around the house, you can help reduce soreness and inflammation. And by incorporating cold showers into your daily routine, perhaps you won't need to reach for pain relief pills. Since you've found an easy, natural way of expediting recovery and comfort, cold showers are a tool for learning to love working out.

BOOSTS HAPPINESS LEVELS

Feeling down or having trouble managing stress?

It may seem like a superficial fix, but taking a cold shower benefits your sense of well-being by boosting your mood. A 2007 research study found that cold showers can help treat depression symptoms, and if used on a routine basis alongside lifestyle adjustments, can complement the effects of prescription medications in lifting moods.

This is due to the stimulation of the dopaminergic transmission in the mesocorticolimbic and nigrostriatal pathway.

In plain English, the cold water triggers a flood of mood-boosting neurotransmitters, which make you feel happy. A separate study that analysed the effects of regular winter swimming on the mood of swimmers showed that after four months of routine cold water swimming, the subjects felt more energetic and active than the control group.

So the next time you find yourself in a depressed state, consider that you can enjoy cold shower benefits in an ocean, a lake or a cold rinse at home. You may just find that water can play a vital role in keeping your body and your mind happy.

AIDS WEIGHT LOSS EFFORTS

Are cold showers good for you when you want to lose weight and keep it off? When practiced routinely, cold water immersion can boost your metabolism. Not only does cold water force your body to work harder to keep you warm – burning calories in the process – it also has an unexpected impact on the type of fat we produce.

According to a 2009 study, researchers found that taking a cold shower benefits weight loss by promoting healthy brown fat, which is the good fat our bodies generate to keep us warm. Brown fat is activated when exposed to extreme cold, and helps eliminate white fat, which is the body fat that piles up around our waistlines and thighs when we consume too many calories.

While cold water immersion is not a substitute for a healthy diet and exercise routine, it does make an excellent supplement.

IMPROVES HAIR AND SKIN

If you struggle with dry or dull skin and hair that never appears healthy, you'll be interested to know that one of the benefits of taking cold showers is improved appearance and health of your skin and hair.

Cold water helps to reduce the size of your pores and tightens your skin. Because cold water doesn't encourage your body to release oils like warm water does, you won't have excess oil that can lead to greasy hair or breakouts. You'll retain those oils to keep your skin adequately moisturized, leaving skin and hair balanced and healthy. The cold water also stimulates hair follicles, increasing hair thickness and length.

QUICKENS THE BODY'S COOLING RESPONSE

Whether you want to cool off after a vigorous workout or a leisurely day in the sun, taking a cold shower benefits both. Physical therapists recommend cold water immersion as a treatment for exertional hyperthermia (overheating), since cold temperatures reduce your temperature and inflammation.

REDUCES PAIN AND SWELLING

If you've ever injured yourself badly enough to experience swelling, you've likely encountered the cold water benefits for this type of injury. Doctors have long recommended the RICE method for alleviating pain and swelling: Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. The second factor, icing your injury, aligns with the health benefits of cold showers, since it involves applying cold compresses to an injury. Exposure to cold temperatures constricts the blood vessels, which reduces swelling and, in turn, reduces pain. Cold shower benefits may also slow the nervous system's transmission of pain signals to the brain, lowering your perception of pain.

CALMS ITCHY SKIN

If you're suffering from itchy skin due to hives, eczema or another cause, add itch relief to your list of cold shower benefits. Your nerves cannot transmit two signals at the same time – i.e. feeling itchy versus feeling cold. So when you take a cold shower, the cold sensation will typically override the itch, providing temporary itch relief.

SO, ARE COLD SHOWERS GOOD FOR YOU?

The bottom line is “yes.” Conditioning your brain and your body to accept, endure and embrace cold water immersion may be challenging, but the cold shower benefits to your health are well worth it. You will be able to activate your body’s natural healing powers to properly support your physiological and mental state of being, begin to feel healthier and happier and even experience some aesthetic benefits in shinier, longer hair and a brighter complexion.

Even if you begin with a quick cold water shower that lowers your skin temperature only briefly, the results can be dramatic. So consider the benefits of taking cold showers, whether it’s for an extra dose of energy during the day or long-lasting change for the future.

COLD SHOWER VS. HOT SHOWER – WHICH IS BETTER?

Cold showers are much better for you than hot showers. Hot water can actually damage your skin by destroying the sebum, a layer that protects you from bacteria. Hot showers can dry out your skin and hair, which can actually cause greasy hair and skin as your body overcompensates. Hot showers also don’t provide the invigoration or health benefits of taking a cold shower. Resist the temptation to take hot showers and take a cold shower instead.

IS IT GOOD TO HAVE COLD SHOWERS EVERY DAY?

Yes, this is a practice you can incorporate into your daily routine. You will get better, faster results by taking a cold shower at a similar time each day, preferably in the morning. The cold shower will help wake you up and energize you for the day ahead, along with all the other benefits discussed here.

HOW LONG DO I TAKE A COLD SHOWER FOR THE BEST RESULTS?

First add 30 seconds of cold water at the end of your hot shower, then work your way up from there. Even a one- to two-minute cold shower can have invigorating effects. For best results 5-10 mins

DO COLD SHOWERS IMPROVE THE IMMUNE SYSTEM?

It’s likely that a cold shower benefits the immune system. One study found that routine cold showers reduced the number of sick days taken from work, implying that they boost the immune system. Another study found that cold water causes the release of adrenaline, helping with inflammation. That could mean better resistance to illness. While the mechanisms by which cold showers help the immune system are unclear, proof is building to support this theory.