



Spokane Holistic
Healing

Spokane Holistic Healing Client Handout

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Infrared Sauna Therapy

Infrared sauna therapy may help with **PTSD** by promoting relaxation, reducing stress, and supporting brain health. While it's not a standalone treatment, it can be a powerful complementary therapy alongside traditional approaches like **therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes**.

How Infrared Sauna May Help PTSD

1. Lowers Cortisol & Reduces Stress

- PTSD is linked to a **dysregulated stress response** and **high cortisol levels**.
- Infrared saunas promote deep relaxation, **lowering cortisol** and reducing overall stress.

2. Boosts Mood & Mental Clarity

- Heat exposure increases **endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin**, which help improve mood and reduce anxiety/depression.
- Some studies suggest **sauna use can mimic the effects of exercise**, improving overall mental well-being.

3. Promotes Better Sleep

- Many people with PTSD struggle with **insomnia and nightmares**.
- Sauna use helps regulate **melatonin production**, leading to **deeper and more restorative sleep**.

4. Reduces Inflammation & Supports Brain Health

- PTSD has been linked to **neuroinflammation** and oxidative stress.
- Infrared saunas promote **detoxification** through sweating and may reduce brain inflammation.

5. Activates the Parasympathetic Nervous System

- PTSD often causes **hypervigilance and an overactive fight-or-flight response**.
- Infrared heat therapy **activates the parasympathetic nervous system (rest-and-digest mode)**, promoting relaxation.

6. Mimics the Effects of Heat Therapy Used for Trauma Recovery

- Some studies show **sauna therapy helps with depression and anxiety** by increasing **brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF)**, which supports brain plasticity and healing.



How to Use Infrared Sauna for PTSD

- **Session Length:** 20-45 minutes, depending on heat tolerance.
- **Temperature:** Start at **100-130°F (38-55°C)** and adjust based on comfort.
- **Frequency:** 3-5 times per week for best results.
- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water before and after to prevent dehydration.
- **Mindfulness:** Consider pairing sauna sessions with deep breathing, meditation, or calming music to enhance relaxation.

Final Thoughts

Infrared sauna therapy can be a **natural way to ease PTSD symptoms** by calming the nervous system, improving mood, and supporting brain health. It's not a cure, but it can be a valuable tool in a **holistic PTSD management plan**.

Red Light Therapy for PTSD

Red light therapy (RLT)—specifically a form called **photobiomodulation (PBM)**—shows promise for **PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)**. While research is still emerging, studies suggest it may help with brain function, emotional regulation, and overall well-being.

How Red Light Therapy May Help PTSD

1. **Improved Brain Function & Neuroplasticity**
 - PBM stimulates **mitochondria**, improving energy production (**ATP**) in brain cells.
 - May support **neuroplasticity**, helping the brain rewire and recover from trauma.
2. **Reduced Inflammation & Oxidative Stress**
 - PTSD has been linked to **neuroinflammation** and oxidative stress.
 - RLT can **reduce inflammation**, promoting brain healing and resilience.
3. **Enhanced Mood & Emotional Regulation**
 - RLT may increase **dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins**, improving mood.
 - It can also **lower cortisol (stress hormone)**, reducing chronic stress responses.
4. **Better Sleep**
 - PTSD often disrupts sleep cycles.
 - Red light therapy can **increase melatonin production**, improving sleep quality and duration.
5. **Reduced Anxiety & Depression**
 - Studies suggest PBM can **help with anxiety and depression**, which commonly co-occur with PTSD.
 - It may promote **calmness and relaxation**, reducing hypervigilance.



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Scientific Research on RLT & PTSD

- A 2019 study on **transcranial photobiomodulation (tPBM)** found it improved **mood, cognition, and emotional regulation** in individuals with PTSD and depression.
- Other research suggests **PBM can help brain regions** involved in PTSD, such as the **prefrontal cortex and amygdala**, by promoting healing and reducing hyperactivity.

How to Use Red Light Therapy for PTSD

- **Wavelengths: Near-infrared (NIR) light** (810-1064nm) penetrates the skull and affects brain cells.
- **Application: Transcranial therapy** (light applied to the forehead, temples, or skull).
- **Session Length: 10-20 minutes per session, 3-5 times per week.**
- **Consistency Matters:** Benefits build over time with regular use.

Final Thoughts

While red light therapy is **not a standalone treatment** for PTSD, it shows promise as a **complementary therapy** to traditional approaches like **therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes**. It may help with **brain healing, mood stabilization, and overall resilience**.