



## Spokane Holistic Healing Client Handout

### Infrared Sauna and Weight Loss

#### How Infrared Saunas Work:

Infrared saunas use infrared light to heat the body directly, rather than heating the air around you like traditional saunas. The infrared rays penetrate the skin and raise your core body temperature, which induces sweating and other physiological responses.

#### Potential Weight Loss Benefits of Infrared Saunas:

##### 1. Increased Calorie Burn:

- **Boost in metabolic rate:** As the body's core temperature rises, your metabolism increases in order to cool down. This process can result in a higher calorie burn. Some studies suggest that infrared sauna sessions can help burn a modest number of calories. For example, a 30-minute infrared sauna session may burn anywhere from 300 to 600 calories, depending on factors like body size, session length, and the temperature of the sauna.

##### 2. Detoxification and Water Weight Loss:

- **Sweating:** Infrared saunas promote sweating, which can temporarily reduce water retention in the body. This means you might see a quick drop in weight after a sauna session, but it is mostly due to water loss and will not result in long-term fat loss.
- **Detoxification:** The sweating process also helps the body eliminate toxins, which may promote overall health and well-being, but it's not directly linked to significant or sustained weight loss.

##### 3. Improved Circulation and Fat Breakdown:

- **Increased circulation:** Infrared sauna use promotes better blood flow and oxygenation of tissues, which can support the breakdown of fat stores over time. This could be beneficial when combined with a healthy diet and exercise routine.
- **Enhanced fat burning:** Some studies suggest that infrared heat may help the body break down fat by increasing the production of norepinephrine, a hormone that can trigger fat cell breakdown. However, more research is needed to confirm these effects on weight loss.

##### 4. Stress Reduction and Hormonal Balance:

- **Lower cortisol levels:** Chronic stress can increase cortisol levels, which may contribute to weight gain, particularly in the abdominal area. Infrared saunas have been shown to reduce cortisol levels, which could help prevent stress-related weight gain.
- **Improved sleep:** Infrared saunas may improve sleep quality by promoting relaxation. Poor sleep is linked to weight gain, particularly due to hormonal



imbalances (e.g., increased hunger hormones). By improving sleep, infrared saunas may indirectly support weight management.

5. **Muscle Relaxation and Recovery:**

- **Reduced muscle soreness:** Infrared heat can help relax muscles and reduce soreness after a workout. This might help with recovery and increase the likelihood of continuing with a regular exercise routine, which, combined with healthy eating, supports long-term weight loss.
- **Increased flexibility:** Regular use of infrared saunas may also help improve flexibility, which can enhance workout performance and support a consistent fitness regimen.

### **Limitations and Considerations:**

- **Not a standalone weight loss solution:** Infrared saunas should not be seen as a magic solution for weight loss. While they can contribute to calorie burn, water weight loss, and stress reduction, sustainable weight loss requires a combination of proper diet, regular physical activity, and lifestyle changes.
- **Temporary effects:** Any weight loss experienced from an infrared sauna session is likely due to water loss through sweating. Once you rehydrate, the lost weight will typically return. For long-term fat loss, more targeted strategies like diet control and exercise are essential.
- **Individual results vary:** The amount of weight lost during infrared sauna sessions will vary depending on factors such as the person's body size, the intensity of the session, and frequency of sauna use. Some may experience greater benefits than others.

### **How to Use Infrared Saunas for Weight Loss:**

1. **Combine with Exercise:** If you're using an infrared sauna to support weight loss, it's most effective when combined with regular physical activity. A workout followed by a sauna session may increase the benefits of both.
2. **Frequency:** Using the sauna 2-3 times a week is a reasonable frequency to experience benefits. However, make sure not to overdo it, as prolonged sauna sessions (e.g., over 30-45 minutes) may lead to dehydration.
3. **Stay Hydrated:** Since infrared saunas cause you to sweat, it's essential to stay well-hydrated before, during, and after a session to support the detox process and prevent dehydration.
4. **Healthy Diet:** To achieve lasting weight loss, combine sauna use with a healthy, balanced diet that's rich in whole foods, lean proteins, and vegetables. A nutritious diet will support your body's natural fat-burning mechanisms.



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5. **Consistency:** Just like with exercise and diet, consistency is key. While you won't see significant weight loss after just one or two sessions, consistent use over time could provide cumulative benefits.

## **Conclusion:**

Infrared saunas can play a supportive role in weight management by boosting calorie burn, reducing water retention, and promoting relaxation. However, they are not a magic bullet for weight loss. The most effective way to lose weight and maintain a healthy weight is through a balanced approach that includes a healthy diet, regular exercise, and adequate rest. Using infrared saunas in combination with these habits may help you achieve your weight loss goals more effectively.

If you're considering using an infrared sauna for weight loss, it's always a good idea to consult with a healthcare professional, especially if you have any pre-existing conditions or concerns.