

CONSTITUTIONAL HYDROTHERAPY



PURPOSE:

Contrast hydrotherapy involves alternating hot and cold applications for the purpose of increasing local circulation and reducing inflammation. It is commonly used for subacute or chronic traumatic injury (*more than 48 hours post-injury*), impaired venous circulation and edema. Contrast hydrotherapy is typically applied as wet compresses or partial immersions of affected body parts. The heat dilates and cold constricts local blood vessels, creating a "pumping" vascular action which helps clear out inflammation and accelerate recovery.

- With this philosophy in mind, ***I recommend doing a mini-contrast treatment every time you shower.*** To do this, simply end your shower with a cold/cool water spray (the temperature you can tolerate may change from day to day). Start with the extremities & finish with the low back – do this for 15-30 seconds to return blood flow to your internal organs.

Constitutional hydrotherapy is another natural modality used to aid the healing and detoxification processes in the body. The purpose of this treatment is to stimulate a more rapid improvement in health, when used with an individualized treatment plan. Viewing the blood as the vehicle conveying life to all cells (oxygen, nutrients, etc.), naturopathic constitutional hydrotherapy manipulates the circulation in order to maximize the benefits of this process for overall health and healing. It enhances the immune response, improves overall nutrition, promotes detoxification and helps restore nervous equilibrium. Naturopathic constitutional hydrotherapy works because it helps to optimize the quality of blood, while improving the efficiency of its circulation. It is a subtle yet powerful treatment with no potential for harm, if done according to the following directions, and under the order of a qualified naturopathic physician. If you are doing this treatment during chronic illness, a weekly report to your naturopathic physician is mandatory, and no other treatments or medications of any kind should be used without the knowledge and approval of your naturopathic physician.

INDICATIONS:

- Circulatory issues
- Detoxification
- Digestive complaints
- Edema
- Fatigue
- Fever/infectious disease
- Immune deficiency
- Joint pain
- Reproductive concerns
- Respiratory problems

CAUTIONS/CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Do not use in acute asthma (over lungs) or if you are aggravated by cold (cold urticaria, Raynaud's syndrome or phenomenon, etc). Use with caution in areas of decreased sensation (anesthesia, paralysis, neuropathy, etc) to avoid tissue damage, burns, etc.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Towels: one large (*4 layered*) & one small (*2 layered*), which are sized so that they cover the chest from collarbone to belt line, and from side to side without draping over the "patients" sides. (*Cut old towels to suit.*)
- Hot and cold water. ***Please use caution to avoid scalding.*** Remember that children have a lower tolerance than adults for extremes of temperature. (*Before applying hot towel, press them to your face to determine if the temperature is OK.*)
- Blankets (*wool*)

PROCEDURE:

A. With a partner

1. With the patient lying on the back, cover the bared chest and abdomen, from the neck to the pubic bone, with 2-4 thicknesses of terrycloth towel wrung out in hot water tolerable to the touch. Cover the body with a blanket to avoid becoming chilled. Leave the hot towels in place for five minutes.
2. Replace the hot towels with a single thickness of towel wrung out in cold water. Cover the person as before to avoid chill. Leave the cold towel in place for 10 minutes. Do not remove the towel until it has become warmed.
3. Turn the patient over and repeat the same treatment on the back.
4. The treatment takes about half-an-hour.

B. On your own

1. Take a hot bath or shower for 5-10 minutes. Get out and dry off.
2. Take a large towel wrung out in cold water and wrap it around the torso, from the armpits to the groin.
3. Cover up with a robe or blanket to avoid a chill. Leave in place 20-30 minutes.
4. Do not remove the towel until it becomes warmed.
5. At the end of this treatment you should be feeling better – you should not feel chilled.
6. If you're not feeling any better, or you are feeling chilled, please, contact me, and do not repeat the treatment.

NOTES:

- Always follow hot with cold, and leave the cold towel on until warmed.
- The cold towel can stay on for the whole night and be OK.
- The cold towel must be only 2 layers and not covering a larger area than the hot towel.
- To help children with this treatment hold and rock them following the cold application...read a book...sing songs.