

Alternating Sitz Baths

The alternating sitz bath is used therapeutically for various conditions within the pelvic region.



Who is it for?

People with the following concerns may benefit from an alternating sitz bath:

- poor pelvic circulation
- vaginal infections
- chronic urinary tract infections
- pelvic inflammatory disease
- insomnia
- prostatitis
- congestive headaches
- constipation
- postpartum healing
- improving neuralgia

Materials:

- 2 washtubs
- 1 foot tub
- towels
- bath thermometer
- 2 wash cloths
- hot and cold water
- optional: sheet/blanket to cover yourself while immersed

Procedure

1. Place a towel under the washtubs, and on the front and back of the tub edges
2. Fill one tub with hot water (106-110°F) to a level that will be ½” *above* the navel
3. Fill foot bath with hot water (106-110°F), and place near or in between hot and cold tubs
4. Fill the other tub with cold water (55-75°F) to a level that will be ½” *below* the navel
5. Place dry towels around both tubs, to avoid slipping during alternations
6. Disrobe from chest down
7. *Lower to sit into tub with **hot** water*
8. *Apply **cold** wash cloths to forehead and back of neck (especially if concern is congestive headaches)*
9. *Place both feet in **hot foot** bath*
10. *Wait 2-5 minutes*
11. *Carefully stand out of hot wash tub and lower to sit into **cold** water tub; place both feet again in **hot foot** bath*
12. *Wait 20-60 seconds*
13. Repeat steps 7-12 three to five times, finishing with cold tub
14. Dunk or rinse off your warm feet with cold water
15. Dry off and rest lying down for 20 to 30 minutes

How does it work?

The hot application to the pelvic area increases circulation to the pelvic organs and muscles by dilating the associated blood vessels. The subsequent cold application initially causes constriction of the vessels, but then dilation. The combined applications create a pump-like effect on the entire body's circulation, but especially in the pelvic region. The greater the contrast between the hot and cold temperatures, the greater the therapeutic effect. Alternating baths are most beneficial for chronic conditions, by increasing circulation and tonifying smooth muscles in the region.

Cautions and Contraindications

- Do not try this treatment if you are unable to move with ease in and out of the two baths.
- Do not try this treatment if you are experiencing hemorrhaging, menorrhagia, atonic conditions (prolapse), pelvic congestion, acute inflammation (UTI's), painful conditions (spasms, colic), acute lung conditions, or heart issues.
- Do not attempt if you have any lack of sensation in the areas that will be submerged. Doing so may cause burns.

Considerations

- This treatment requires emerging from and immersing in tubs several times, and can be quite messy; lay towels around the tubs to soak up water and ensure a non-slip surface.
- The tub you are using must be proportional to your body; keep this in mind when filling the tubs to an appropriate water level.
- Find a thermometer that can hang on the side of the tub to avoid sitting on it throughout the treatment.
- Boil some water in a kettle and keep it near the hot water tub during the treatment to reheat the water as necessary to maintain the hot temperature (106-110°F).