

## FAST FACTS

# Cold water therapy

## Cold Water Immersion (CWI)

### What

A practice that involves immersing oneself in cold water for a period of time, typically for several minutes. This practice has been used for centuries in various cultures around the world as a form of therapy and as a way to promote health and well-being. CWI has been found to have a number of potential health benefits, including reducing inflammation, boosting the immune system, improving circulation, and increasing mental clarity and focus. It may also help to reduce stress and anxiety, improve sleep, and promote overall feelings of well-being. While this practice may not be suitable for everyone, it can be a safe and effective when done properly and under the guidance of a healthcare professional.

### How it works

CWI triggers a number of immediate and adaptive physiological responses in the body:

- Blood vessels near the surface of the skin constrict, which helps to conserve heat, maintain core body temperature. When blood flow is redirected to the core of the body, it can help to improve circulation and reduce inflammation.
- It triggers a number of hormonal and neurological responses in the body. Specifically, exposure to cold water has been found to activate the sympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the body's "fight or flight" response. This can lead to a short term increase in heart rate, blood pressure, and adrenaline, which can help to improve alertness, focus, and mental clarity.
- One of the more powerful elements of cold water therapy is the mental commitment. Whilst the cold does impact our physiology, it is the relationship with self that is challenged.
- Stimulates the production of valuable brown adipose tissue in the body which improves glucose homeostasis and insulin sensitivity.

### Learn more

[Huberman Lab](#)

[Cold exposure – the science](#)



### Pros

- Low cost - can do it in the ocean, lake, river or by emptying a few bags of ice into a bathtub
- Accessible - no need to go to a special facility

### Cons

- Very uncomfortable process for most people
- Not suitable for everyone
- Ideally done with guidance in case of adverse reaction

### Contraindications

Individuals experiencing any of the following should seek guidance from their healthcare professional:

- Hypersensitivity to cold
- Individuals with Raynaud's disease may be at increased risk for tissue damage
- Heart disease
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Pregnancy