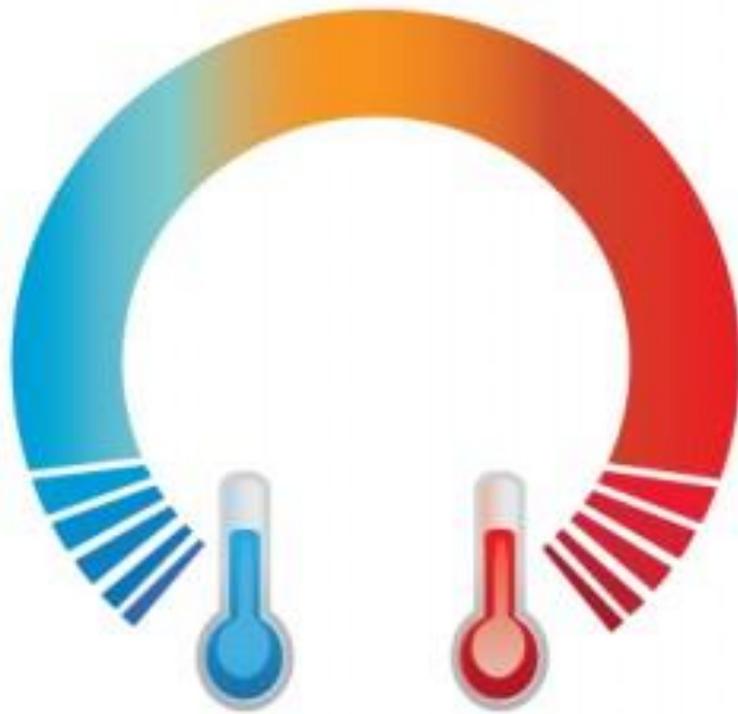


The Multifold Benefits of Hot and Cold Therapy



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Introduction:

In today's high tech fast paced life, illness has become a norm. There are multiple modern ways to treat the various health issues that are faced by people. But there are also traditional treatments that are still being followed till date but with a tinge of modernity in them. One of these treatments is Hot and Cold therapy, which dates back to ancient Greeks. The Greeks used hot, warm, cool and cold therapies despite the lack of Thermal-aid pads or freezers.

Hot therapy is also known as thermotherapy where heat is used in therapy for pain relief and other health issues. Hot therapy comes in the form of a hot cloth, heating pad, hot water, ultrasound, whirlpool baths, hydro collator, hot oil massage, hot stone, wraps and others. Hot therapy is commonly used for the purpose of rehabilitation. It is used for stiff joints or chronic muscle or joint pain

Cold therapy is an effective way to reduce post-surgery pain and swelling. It is used for sprained ankles, bruise, muscle tear or inflammation. It is used in the form of gel packs or more professionally ice machines.

History of Hot and Cold Therapy:

We have already learnt that the Greeks used hot, warm, cool and cold therapies to treat various problems related to health.

According to Greeks:

Hot water stimulates initially and slightly raises the body temperature, but it is quite relaxing, especially to the muscles, joints and blood vessels. It also opens the pores, induces sweating, and can penetrate into the skin and muscles. That is why hot vapor is used in skin treatments. Hot water can also ripen boils or skin eruptions and bring them to the surface for release,

although prolonged immersion in extremely hot water is not recommended.

Cold water can act as a bracing, stimulating tonic. After bathing in the hot water pools, Romans used to go for a quick dip in the frigidarium, or cold water bath, to brace their skin and close back their pores. Cold water constricts the blood vessels, stimulates circulation, digestion and metabolism, and awakens the appetite, which gives an exhilarating effect. Cold water also reduces swelling and inflammation. It is not recommended for people with phlegmatic issues, the too young or the too old. Cold water immersion should only be for a maximum of about 3 to 4 minutes.

Chapter 1: Hot Therapy- A Detailed Study

Hot therapy, as discussed earlier, is used as therapy for pain relief and other health issues, in the form of a hot cloth, heating pad, hot water, ultrasound, whirlpool baths, hydro collator, hot oil massage, hot stone and others.

How It Works:

Heat creates higher tissue temperatures, producing vasodilatation that increases the supply of oxygen and nutrients and eliminates carbon dioxide and metabolic waste.

The Multifold Uses:

Hot therapy is used to cure muscle spasms, fibromyalgia, contracture and bursitis. Heat is a vasodilator, thus it should be avoided in tissues with inadequate vascular supply, in bleeding disorders, in tissues with a severe lack of sensitivity and in scars.

Heat is also used in the treatment of infection and cancers. Cancer cells and many bacteria have poor mechanisms for adapting to heat, therefore are more vulnerable to heat-induced death.

- **Hot Therapy for Headaches:**

Headache is a common illness. Heat therapy can be used for treating headaches and migraines. People who suffer from chronic headaches also suffer from tight muscles in their neck and back. The application of heat at the back/upper back area can help to release the tension associated with headache.

- **Hot Therapy for Arthritis:**

With the increasing health issues related to arthritis, it has become important for every household to have heat pads at home. Arthritis does not affect a particular age group alone. Today, young and old suffer from arthritis alike.

- **Hot Therapy for Menstrual Cramps:**

Menstrual cramps or aches are commonly caused by tightening of the uterine muscles. Hot therapy works by relaxing the muscles and easing the pain. Keeping the heat pad on the lower abdomen can cause relief. Brands, such as Essencell manufacture Natural heat therapy patches solely for the purpose of menstrual cramp relief.

- **Hot Therapy for Cancer:**

Heat therapy to treat cancer is called Hyperthermia- the carefully controlled use of heat for medical purposes. Hyperthermia is a treatment that could be done by highly experienced doctors because the heat to which the body is exposed needs to be monitored as it may result in killing the normal tissue cells. With the advent of newer tools, hyperthermia is gaining popularity against cancer. Local hyperthermia where heat is used only on a part of the body to kill a tumor uses very high heat whereas whole-body hyperthermia uses low heat.

- **Hot Therapy for Weight Loss:**

Weight loss is a craze that has spread very fast around the world. In a world where 'size zero' is admired, hot therapy in the form of wraps is used. The blood circulation is lesser in the area where fat is accumulated. Heat is used to melt the 'cold spots' and to ensure good blood circulation in the

area. Though expensive, this method is highly effective.

- **Hot Stone Massage Therapy:**

Hot stone massage therapy is a massage therapy where the therapist uses smooth heated stones. The heated stone deeply relaxes and helps up warm tight muscles. This kind of therapy is a specialty therapy and is done by special therapists.

- **Hot Therapy for Back Pain:**

Hot therapy application can help provide lower back pain relief through several mechanisms:

1. Heat dilates the blood vessels of the muscles surrounding the spine. This increases the flow of oxygen and nutrients to the muscles, helping to heal the damaged tissue.
2. Heat also stimulates the sensory receptors in the skin, which means that applying heat to the lower back will decrease transmissions of pain signals to the brain and partially relieve the discomfort.
3. Heat application facilitates stretching the soft tissues around the spine, including muscles, connective tissue, and adhesions. Consequently, with heat therapy, there will be a decrease in stiffness as well as injury, with an increase in flexibility and overall feeling of comfort. As flexibility is very important for a healthy back.

How to Use:

The usage of heat therapy is an individual's choice. There are

various ways of using heat therapy like

- *Using disposable heat patches or belts:* Disposable heat patches, such as Essencell's Natural Heat Therapy Patches are convenient to use as they can be used even for about 10 hours while on-the-go and are disposable. Open a patch and stick it on the affected area and leave. Electronic heating belts are also effective as they give constant heat while plugged in. These belts can be worn around the affected area but may not provide the ability to walk around while plugged in.
- *Bathing in heated swimming pool:* Full body immersion and the exercise that is done while swimming gives excellent relief to any sort of pain. Just swim for about half an hour and feel good for the next three hours.
- *Hot packs that can be heated in microwave:* Like disposable patches, there are also hot packs that can be heated in the microwave and re-used.
- *Keeping a moist heating pad:* Disposable packs and heating pads are dry. There are also moist heating pads, which are moist and are appealing to few people.
- *Applying therapeutic mixture of paraffin and mineral oil:* A mixture of paraffin wax and mineral oil is used to treat pain on even surface of the body. The patient dips 8 to 12 times in the mixture and the extremity will be wrapped up and insulated for about 20 minutes.
- *Soaking in warm bath:* Soaking in warm bath is like soaking in the swimming pool without any exercise.
- *Using warm, moist towel or cloth:* Warm or moist cloth can be kept on the affected area for reducing pain to a little extent.

Safety Measures:

It is important to take safety measures while using any kind of heat therapy

though patches like Essencell are safer than electronic devices.

- Don't apply heating pads directly to skin. If using devices, wrap the hot device in a thin towel.
- Don't apply heat for longer than 20 minutes, unless recommended by a doctor for longer use.
- Don't use heat if there's swelling. Use cold first, and then heat.
- Don't use heat if you have poor circulation or diabetes.
- Don't use heat on an open wound or stitches.
- Don't lie down on a heating pad; the soothing effect may make u fall asleep and burn your skin.
- Do not use heat during poor circulation or diabetes.

Aftercare:

After the treatment, any symptom of nausea or dizziness should be documented. A one hour interval should be given between two treatments.

Risks:

All heat treatments have the risk of damaging tissues. It is important to monitor the heat temperature that the body is exposed to.

Chapter 2: Cold Therapy- A Detailed Study

Cold therapy is an effective way to reduce post-surgery pain, swelling, sprained ankles, bruise, muscle tear or inflammation. Cold therapy or 'Cryotherapy' is usually used for injuries caused during sports.

How It Works:

Cold therapy works on the principle of heat exchange. When a cooler object is put in direct contact with an object that has a warmer temperature, the cooler object will drive the heat out of the area that it has direct contact with. Cold therapy is applied to an injury to reduce the temperature of the damaged area.

Uses:

Cold therapy is used to reduce pain or swelling caused by surgery, sprain, strain, bruise, inflammation and muscle tear. It is more often used in the treatment of injuries caused by sports. Cold therapy can be used to treat paralysis, migraine, fever, back pain and general pain. It also helps in weight loss.

Cryotherapy for pain relief may be used for:

- Runner's knee
- Arthritis pain
- Tendonitis
- Sprains
- Pain and swelling after a hip or knee replacement

- To treat pain or swelling under a cast or a splint
- Lower back pain

The benefits of applying ice include:

- It lowers your skin temperature.
- It reduces the nerve activity.
- It reduces pain and swelling.

Cold Therapy for Fever:

Cold therapy patches like the ones from brands Essencell are effective to bring down the body temperature thus reducing fever. It is also safe for children.

Cold Therapy for Migraine:

Another common household health issue is migraine. Migraine can also be treated with the help of cold patches from Essencell. Women, who are more prone to migraine, can stick these patches and work around with completely no need to stay on the bed.

Cold Therapy for Back Pain:

It is used for sore lower back or neck. Cold therapy can be combined with other treatments for treating back pain. For those who experience back pain, ice cold massage therapy works the best as it is quick, free and easy to do.

Cold Therapy for Weight Loss:

Cold therapy for weight loss is usually overlooked. When heat burns the fat, it is normally assumed that cold doesn't affect the fat and solidifies it. But on the contrary, cold therapy actually burns fat. When the body is exposed to low temperatures, the body tries to keep up its normal temperature by using energy, therefore quickly burns fat.

Cold Therapy for Pain:

Cold therapy reduces pain and swelling caused by sprains, strains, etc by reducing the blood flow to the area that is affected. When the blood flow doesn't reach the affected area, it turns numb. The numbness gives relief to the patient.

How to Use:

Cold Therapy can be used in the form of:

- *Cold therapy patches:* The most effective way of cold therapy is using the cold therapy patches like those from Essencell. Essencell's patches are disposable and can be used for multiple purposes like migraine, fever, pain, muscle ache and sprain. The patch is to be stuck on the affected area and could be moved about with.
- *Frozen gel packs:* Gel packs are easily available in the market. The pack is frozen and can also be re-used by freezing. Gel packs help to reduce pain in a soothing way.
- *Ice packs:* Like gel packs, ice packs are also frozen. The ice pack can be home made. The ice cubes need to be wrapped in a cloth before applying to the skin.
- *Ice massage:* Ice massage is a therapy which includes both cold and hot therapy. The patient is given a massage with a large ice pack. The rubbing

of the pack on the body generates heat thus combining cold therapy with hot therapy.

- *Ice water bottle:* Ice water bottle is an effective way to relieve pain. A water bottle can be frozen and used for this purpose. As the water is frozen the effect of cold stays for long. Ice water bottle may get difficult to use by one's own self. Therefore someone can be asked for help when the pain is in unreachable areas of the body like in the back or lower back.

Safety Measures:

It is very important to be safe even when using cold therapy. The cold pack should be closely monitored as over exposure to cold may cause cold burn or blistering of the skin.

- Should be used between 24-48 hours after an injury.
- Do not apply the cold pack for more than 20 minutes. And always take a 10 minute break between two sessions.
- Do not apply cold packs directly on the skin. It is always advised to wrap the cold pack in a thin towel before use.
- Cold therapy is not advisable for patients who have Raynaud's Syndrome, cold allergic conditions, or areas of impaired sensation
- When in doubt whether to use heat or cold, always check with a health provider.

Risks:

It is very important to avoid high and prolonged exposure to cold therapy. Cold therapy, when over-done will lead to serious problems like:

- Tissue damage

- Nerve damage
- Skin abrasions
- Chronic pain

Chapter 3: Hot Therapy vs. Cold Therapy

Most people are confused about the application of hot and cold therapy - when to use cold therapy and when to use hot therapy. For acute injuries it is always advisable to seek a doctor's help. The hot vs. cold therapy debate always seems complicated but understanding the benefits of both the therapies is the key to pain relief and quick recovery.

1. **Use Cold Therapy** immediately or between 24-48 hours after an injury to reduce inflammation.
2. But do not use Cold Therapy for stiff muscles or joints.
3. **Use Hot Therapy** to relax and soothe sore muscles or to increase range of motion.
4. Do not use Hot Therapy on an injury that is already warm to the touch.

These 4 guidelines are simple ways to determine whether to use hot therapy or cold therapy.

Cold Therapy is preferred by some:

Sudden acute injuries like a muscle tear, sprain, bruise or inflammation should be treated with cold therapy as soon as possible. Because when an injury occurs suddenly, the surrounding soft tissues often bruise and become inflamed. Cold therapy helps to reduce these symptoms.

Cold therapy helps to:

1. *Reduce Swelling:* Cold therapy helps to constrict the blood vessels and reduces blood flow to the affected area. The reduced blood flow limits the amount of fluid that accumulates around the injury, thus preventing or minimizing swelling and bruising.
2. *Relieves Pain:* Cold therapy helps to numb the nerve endings, which decreases the pain messages sent to the brain.

Cold therapy is also recommended for treating overuse injuries, which is quite common in sportspersons. It is advised to apply a cold pack after activity to help control inflammation. Cold therapy should **not be used before** exercise. For ages, doctors have recommended using frozen packs to reduce pain. Some of the products combine the traditional and modern methods of healing and bring the best solution for several health issues.

Few Prefer Hot:

Stiff and sore muscles are treated best with Hot Therapy because the heat helps to relax and loosen muscles. To improve mobility and flexibility, heat is also used before exercise to loosen muscles and increase joint elasticity. But heat should not be used after physical activity. Essencell provides natural heat therapy products that work best for menstrual cramps.

Alternating Hot Therapy and Cold Therapy:

Experts like The Mayo Clinic recommend alternating hot and cold therapy for quick pain relief and recovery, after the first 3 to 5 days of cold therapy for an acute injury. The contraction from cold therapy and expansion from heat therapy and contraction acts like a pump. The blood vessels expand, during the hot therapy treatment, increasing circulation and the flow of healing oxygen and nutrients to the affected area. But the

blood vessels constrict during the cold therapy treatment, therefore the circulation is reduced which allows the injured area to soak up the nutrient rich blood before it is pumped on.

Precisely, cold and hot therapy work to help faster recovery. It is easy to switch from hot therapy. Having Essencell hot and cold patches at home would help to easily relieve pain whenever needed. Have one to store in the freezer and one to keep at room temperature ready to microwave. But it is advisable to contact a healthcare provider for serious injuries or if your pain does not improve within 48 hours. A healthcare provider can also provide answers to questions specific to your situation.

Drive away your pain with hot and cold therapy and live a wholesome life. With Essencell products, you don't ever have to worry about being stumped with pain again.

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