



Therapeutic Contrast Shower

Indications

The contrast shower is a simple and convenient way to stimulate vitality and promote detoxification, as well as treat generalized areas of pain and soreness. The idea is simple: alternate between hot and cold water while you shower to stimulate your body to heat itself up and cool itself down. This temperature contrast helps strengthen and normalize the nervous, circulatory, endocrine (hormonal), musculoskeletal and immune systems and is excellent for helping the body cope with physiological and psychological stress.

CONTRAINDICATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS

- **Heart disease or vascular disease, including hypertension, high blood cholesterol, intermittent claudication, weak connective tissue (relating to high risk for plaque rupturing), etc.**
- **Vascular insufficiency or stasis, including blood clots, deep vein thrombosis, phlebitis, etc.**
- **Asthma**
- **Pregnancy**
- **Diabetes**
- **Cold urticaria or cold-induced hemolysis**
- **Raynaud's syndrome or phenomenon**

NOTE: Discontinue or decrease intensity of contrast shower if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, nauseous, or excessively chilled.

Acute illness, menstruation, dehydration, decreased vitality, and poor nutrition can limit your tolerance for contrast treatment and, in these cases, it should be undertaken cautiously.

Procedure

- After your normal hot shower, gradually turn down the hot water until the shower is pleasantly cool and rinse your whole body under the cooler water for about **30 seconds - 1 minute**.
- If you have localized areas of pain or soreness you can focus the shower stream on those areas.
- Next, switch the shower back to hot to rewarm your body for **3-5 minutes**. Repeat the cycle up to 3 times and end with cool.
- **It is important that the hot phase is longer than the cold, and that you finish with cool water.**
- After the final cool rinse, dry yourself off quickly, rubbing briskly with a cold towel to stimulate the rewarming process. As a sign of increased peripheral circulation, your skin may turn transiently pink afterwards.
- It is also important to note that the sharper the contrast in temperature between the hot and cold phases increases the therapeutic benefit. As you get used to treatment, you can increase the intensity by varying the speed and degree of the temperature change.

Resources

1. Hayes, K.W. *Manual for Physical Agents*, 4th ed. 1993. Norwalk, CT. Appleton & Lange. Pp. ix, 169.
2. Lindlahr, H. and Poesnecker, G.E. *Nature Cure 2000: Philosophy and Practice Based on the Unity of Disease and Cure*. 1998. Quakertown, PA. Beverly Hall Corp. Pp. xxii, 360.