



WILD SWIMMING

HEALTH BENEFITS

Cold-water swimming has so many incredible benefits for our overall health. Here are 10 of the most sublime reasons to take the plunge:

1. IT BOOSTS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

The [effects of cold water on the immune system](#) have been studied widely. Cold water helps to boost the body's white blood cell count because the body is forced to react to the sudden change in temperature. This adaptation to changing conditions is one of the things that, over time, makes your body better at activating its defences. Adaptability is the ultimate tactic of a healthy and resilient immune system. This is why people who practice regular cold-water swimming rarely get sick.

2. IT GIVES YOU A NATURAL HIGH

COLD water swimming activates endorphins. You start feeling the effects of this happy hormone as soon as your body hits the water! Endorphins are what the brain produces to make us feel good about certain activities. Cold water swimming also brings us close to the pain barrier. Endorphins are released when we're in pain, to help us cope with it. Cold water swimming is also a form of exercise, and exercise has been proven to [treat depression](#). Who couldn't do with a few extra endorphins in times like these?

3. IT IMPROVES HAIR AND SKIN HEALTH

Good circulation is essential for good [hair and skin health](#). Cold water swimming flushes your veins, arteries, and capillaries by forcing the blood to the surface of your skin and pushing the cold downwards. In other words, it helps to warm our extremities. Repeated exposure [adapts us to the cold](#). This helps protect our skin and hair as well as our organs and bones. In older and vulnerable people, this is essential. It helps them better cope during harsh winters, making the cold season less of a health risk and generally more enjoyable.



4. IT BOOSTS YOUR METABOLISM AND BURNS CALORIES

Cold therapies can help with weight loss because the heart has to pump faster in cold water and the body must work harder to keep everything warm while swimming. Overall, far [more calories](#) are burned during cold water swimming than swimming in warmer conditions. The idea that drinking cold water increases the number of calories you burn may be a myth, but it is a fact that cold water decreases your body temperature so much that the body must act.

5. IT INCREASES YOUR LIBIDO AND SUPPORTS FERTILITY

Cold water was traditionally a method thought to repress sexual urges. The truth is that cold water actually helps to increase your libido! A dip in some cold water boosts oestrogen and testosterone production, adding an edge to fertility and libido. The benefits of [increased libido and fertility](#) include more confidence, higher self-esteem, enhanced mood, and greater sense of vitality.



6. IT DRAMATICALLY IMPROVES MENTAL HEALTH

Cold water swimming has been shown to improve concentration and memory function as well as reducing stress and depression. [Studies](#) show that people suffering from depression have experienced long term relief from anxiety and stress after making cold-water swimming part of their regular routine. Reducing stress means you will feel better, you will feel more optimistic, and you will be more resilient when stressful times come along. Cold water swimming places positive stress on the body physically and calms the mind. Many studies have explored the link between cold water and [stress reduction](#). Cold water swimmers are naturally calmer and more relaxed and as a result, they breathe more deeply and are more resilient in the face of adversity.

7. EASES THE SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

Menopause can cause a variety of uncomfortable symptoms as the female body undergoes extreme hormonal changes. There are ongoing studies and testimonies given about the positive [effects of cold-water swimming on menopause](#) that show how cold-therapies can help to ease many of the [negative side-effects](#) of menopause that women experience such as hot-flashes, headaches, night-sweats, difficulty sleeping, vaginal dryness, reduced libido, anxiety, and memory loss etc.

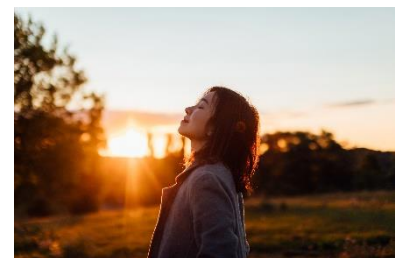


8. IT IS A GREAT WAY OF SOCIALISING AND BONDING WITH FRIENDS

Humans are hard-wired for [connection and socialisation](#). We need regular bonding time with other humans to live healthy and happy lives. There is a great sense of community and camaraderie amongst cold water swimmers. This is because there is nothing that brings people together like facing a challenge and sharing the experience as a group. Socialising while doing exercise with others makes it so much more fun and creates a lot more joy and laughter than doing it alone, which in turn boosts happy hormones and can dramatically improve our general health and wellbeing.

9. IT SOOTHES AND TONES YOUR VAGUS NERVE

The vagus nerve operates all our major organs as well as our body's "fight or flight" response. If you have high vagal tone, your parasympathetic nervous system is functioning well, and that means that your body can relax quicker after stress. One way to stimulate the vagus nerve and increase vagal tone is through cold water immersion. Many [experts believe](#) that repeated exposure to cold water diminishes your body's parasympathetic stress response. By activating the parasympathetic nervous system (this is the system which is responsible for slowing your heart rate and increasing intestinal and gland activity), cold water effectively soothes and tones the vagus nerve. It's the 'tone' of this vagus nerve that relates to mental health.



10.IT GETS YOU OUTDOORS AND PROVIDES NATURAL CATHARSIS AND HEALING

Human beings crave nature and it naturally comforts and inspires us. [Studies](#) show that time spent in nature is a natural antidote for stress. Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is very cathartic and can dramatically improve good health and wellbeing. Even a short stroll outside, soaking up vitamin D from sunlight and soaking in the elements can bring great catharsis by exercising the body, calming the mind, and elevating the spirit. A daily cold swim in living water, filled with its multitude of healthy bacteria, has many powerful therapeutic and healing effects. Time spent communing with nature can lower blood pressure and stress hormone levels, reduce nervous system arousal, enhance immune system function, increase self-esteem, reduce anxiety, and improve your mood.



Yours host's - Jo & Iain