



MEMBER UPDATE

ReFresh

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This week...

The Power of Heat

Heat therapies for healing and wellness date back to the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Mayans. Heat therapy in the form of saunas have been used in Scandinavian culture for hundreds of years for the benefits of cleansing, relaxation, and weight loss.

In Canada, sweat lodges are and have been an important part of culture within Indigenous communities for thousands of years, with evidence that sweat lodges were used in ceremonies as early as 400 B.C. Traditional sweat lodges are heated, dome-shaped structures used during certain purification rites to promote healthy living through sweating out toxins and negative energy that create disorder and imbalance in life. Sweat lodge ceremonies cleanse the body, mind, and soul. Read about interesting facts related to the

history of sweat lodges, including when they were banned by the Indian Act until 1951, in these two articles:

The Canadian Encyclopedia | [Sweat Lodge](#)

University of Alberta Law | [The Sweat Lodge: A Primer](#)

A sauna is simply a room specifically designed to help you sweat. There are three types of saunas that offer a variety of health benefits, even with just a few minutes a day of use. The three types are: dry, steam (wet), and infrared. I am fortunate enough to have a small, 2-person infrared sauna in my den and use it to experience a deep, healthy sweat that relieves stress, reduces muscle tension, and delivers an overall sense of relaxation and well-being.

The three types of saunas:

1. **Dry saunas** are heated with fire, hot stones, gas, or electricity
2. **Steam saunas** generate steam by applying water on a heating element
3. **Infrared saunas** use infrared heaters to emit light that delivers radiant heat that's absorbed by the surface of the skin. Unlike the dry and wet saunas that heat the air around you, infrared saunas heat you from within, and are a good option for those who find the heat from other types of saunas unbearable.

What type of Sauna is best for you? [Here](#) is a detailed video, which might be especially interesting to the biology fans out there!

Or you can check out this shorter informative video: [What happens to your body in an infrared sauna](#)

Health Benefits

Regardless of the type of sauna type or humidity level, they can all produce similar health benefits, such as releasing 'feel good' endorphins, as well as widening the blood vessels to improve circulation and blood flow. The heat relaxes tense muscles, which helps to relieve minor pain, muscle aches, and prepares you for a better sleep.

Depending on the duration of sauna use, you will experience improved blood circulation, comparable to the effects of moderate exercise such as walking. Your heart rate may

increase to 100 to 150 beats per minute while the release of growth hormones increases by as much as 200 to 300%.

The benefits of regular sauna use are linked to its impact on circulatory, cardiovascular, and immune functions. Check out this video to learn more: [Why You Need to be Using a Sauna - TOP 7 BENEFITS](#)

Here are 10 Proven Clinical Health Benefits of Sauna Use:

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| 1. Supercharge your cell power | 7. Improve muscle function and recovery |
| 2. Slow aging | 8. Fuel weight loss |
| 3. Detoxify heavy metals and chemicals | 9. Boost brain function |
| 4. Make your heart happy and healthy | 10. Ignite your immune system |
| 5. Reduce blood pressure | 11. BONUS BENEFIT: improve emotional health and mood |
| 6. Optimize athletic performance | |

[Click here](#) to learn the science behind these benefits.

For you athletes out there...

Sauna use can improve athletic performance and stamina due increased circulation. Infrared saunas and steam rooms are also tremendously important for injury prevention and recovery programs – ask any Olympic sports medicine practitioner. Infrared saunas can be used within both pre- and post-workout routines, to prevent injury, and regular use has been shown to improve flexibility.

When I do a bootcamp workout, or introduce a new activity to my workout routine, I immediately go into the infrared sauna when I am done. The result is that I do not experience nearly the same amount of stiffness and pain the next day as I would have expected. I learned that this is because sauna use reduces the build-up lactic acid in our muscles, allowing them to loosen and relax to repair more quickly.

Check out [this article](#) that goes into more detail on the value of saunas for athletes.

Enjoying a Sauna Safely

The average person loses about half a litre of sweat in just a short period of time in the sauna. ***It is important to drink plenty of water before, during, and after using a sauna.*** The length of time to safely stay in a sauna will vary depending on what type of sauna it is. It's critical to not over-extend your sauna session, as prolonged time without adequate water can increase your risk of dehydration.

You should always check with your physician before using a sauna. There are also certain health conditions that are not compatible with saunas or steam rooms including:

- asthma or other breathing conditions
- heart disease
- pregnancy
- epilepsy
- very high or very low blood pressure
- being under the influence of alcohol, or taking stimulants, tranquilizers, or other mind-altering drugs

Getting in some Sauna Time!

There are many places you can enjoy different types of saunas, like in hotels when you are travelling, community centres, pools, and spas. There are also an increasing number of specialized spas opening up, with a variety of different cold, heat, water, and sauna therapies to stimulate relaxation and well-being.

TIP: While relaxing in the sauna, practice mindfulness; when you soothe your body physically, often the mind and the emotions follow suit. The effect is long-lasting and will likely help you get a better night's sleep!

Sources

Healthline | [Are Saunas Good for You?](#)

Mayo Clinic Proceedings | [Cardiovascular and Other Health Benefits of Sauna Bathing: A Review of the Evidence](#)

Heads Up Health | [The Science of Saunas: 10 Proven Clinical Health Benefits](#)

Steam Sauna | [Why Olympic Athletes and Competitive Fitness Enthusiasts use Saunas](#)

Harvard Health Publishing | [Sauna Health Benefits: Are Saunas Healthy or Harmful?](#)

The International Indigenous Policy Journal | [The Sweat Lodge Ceremony: A Healing Intervention for Intergenerational Trauma and Substance Use](#)