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## Contrast therapy

Contrast therapy involves applying alternating hot and cold to the injured tissue. It is a simple, safe and cheap method of aiding recovery and reducing pain. Heating and cooling helps to stimulate blood circulation and has a positive effect on inflammation. Cooling also has an analgesic effect and therefore contrast therapy can be a useful aid to reduce pain prior to performing mobilisation exercises.



Hot and cold can be applied in a variety of ways. With lower back or neck pain it is usually easiest to perform in the shower or using hot / cold packs. (If using hot / cold packs make sure you wrap them in a tea cloth to avoid contact burns). With extremity injuries (e.g. wrists or ankles) ice / hot water in separate buckets works well.

To perform:

- Apply heat for 1-3 minutes. Remove.
- Apply cold for 1-3 minutes. Remove.
- Repeat the process 3-5 times.
- For best results perform gentle mobilisation exercises after each bout of ice and heat or after the complete session.

Icing can aggravate some nerve complaints. If contrast therapy aggravates your pain, stop and consult your chiropractor or physiotherapist.