



E-Mail Newsletter

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Finnish Sauna - An introduction...



The sauna is a small room or hut heated to around 80 -100 degrees Celsius. It is used for bathing as well as for mental and physical relaxation.

While a hot sauna may seem a cruel punishment to unexperienced bathers, it is actually a very pleasant therapy. All you need is a towel and at an hour of time. Sauna is a physiotherapy treatment which has a lot of health benefits. And no need to worry, it's **entirely safe**.

... and a lot more



The sauna has a long history and close relatives in other cultures: the Russian banya, the Native American sweat lodge or inipi, the Turkish hamam, even the Japanese onsen. In Finland it has 2 thousand years of **history**. Today there are over 1.8 million saunas in Finland, which translates to a ratio of one sauna for every three Finns! The sauna means a lot to the Finns. It is not only a place to get clean, but also a place to relax and socialize. Many important business deals have been made in the sauna. This might seem a bit unusual, but when compared to a formal meeting, the atmosphere is more relaxed in a sauna and usually contributes to a positive outcome.



Most people think of the Finnish sauna as a dry heat bath, but in fact, the Finns throw water on the hot stones that warm the sauna to create what is known as "loily"- the sudden burst of steam that creates a moist heat in the sauna. The steam raises the relative humidity in the sauna to approximately 40%. Without the moisture, some people find the heat irritating to the mucus membranes.

In this, the Finnish sauna is not unlike its Russian counterpart, the "banya," a hot vapor bath, which is a popular cleansing, relaxing, and beauty-enhancing treatment. Moscow alone features more than 50 of

such large "banya" with room for up to 70 people at a time.



Sauna Routine - How to get the best of sauna?

Take a warm shower and towel dry your body.

Then follow this routine:

- Go to sauna for 8-15 min or as long as you can bear, don't use on your body any oils or lotions before or while in sauna, you can do it afterwards, sit on a towel for hygiene reason
- Cool down with stream of cold water start from the feet follow the legs up to the hips, than hands follow up to the shoulders, after that face, neck and finally the torso.
- Ideally immerse in plunging pool or just take cold shower over the whole body, stop when you start feeling cold
- Dry yourself and take few minutes rest before next session

Repeat the whole routine twice more.

Every stage should be complete heat up and complete cool down. You should not feel hot at all when you go home. Otherwise you can suffer from side effects such as: headache, cold rashes, changes in blood pressure, dizziness. And you will miss out on benefits of this therapy.

After 3 sessions in sauna take at least 20 min break and rehydrate your body, Drink plenty of water or freshly made fruit or vegetable juice. Never drink alcohol after sauna.

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Benefits and Contraindications

Regular saunas offer therapeutic value both for the body and mind. Studies indicate that saunas:

- relax sore, tight, overworked muscles
- relieve daily stress and tension
- relieve tension headaches
- reduce and remove body toxins
- increase cardiovascular strength
- increase blood circulation
- lower blood pressure (temporarily)
- strengthen the immune system
- improve lung function
- refresh and moisturize your skin, in long term makes the skin more supple
- burn calories to help weight control
- induce a deeper & more relaxing sleep
- Speeds up recovery after sport injury (only in post acute stage at least 1week after muscle injury, 3 weeks after joint injury)

Contraindications:

- Infectious, contagious diseases
- Acute stage of rheumatism, acute inflammations
- Venereal diseases
- Any heart condition
- Pregnancy
- As with every medical condition always seek medical advice before proceeding with any therapy.