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## Ask A Practitioner: What Type Of Sauna Should I Use?



***Join Basmati.com every week for a Q&A session with one of Basmati's practitioners, Melissa Hill (FDN-P)! We know that there is a lot of confusing information out there, which can make applying health advice overwhelming. Sometimes, it's best to ask a practitioner directly, so each week we'll cover a common health question!***

***Do you have a health question you'd like to ask? Write to us at [editors@basmati.com](mailto:editors@basmati.com) and your question could be chosen and featured in a future column!***

**Q. What type of sauna is good for detoxing? Does it matter what type of sauna I use, near infrared or far infrared? Which is better?**

**A. Saunas have long been used for wellness. There are records of saunas or "bath houses" in [Finland back 2000 years ago](#)**

. Spending time in a sauna can do wonders for your body and mind. A sauna is typically a room made of wood that is heated with hot stones to temperatures of 160-200 degrees Fahrenheit. Sitting in a sauna warms up your body, enhancing circulation, and you begin to sweat. This heating of the tissues of the body has numerous health benefits: besides promoting sweating, saunas produce relaxation, boost feel good hormones in your body, relieve pain, relax tense muscles, and can improve cardiovascular health and longevity.

Besides traditional saunas, there are also Infrared saunas that can offer even more therapeutic benefits. Infrared light/energy doesn't just heat up the air of the room, but penetrates to deeper layers of the body. The room won't get as hot as a traditional sauna (usually 110 -135 degrees Fahrenheit), but this radiant heat will be absorbed deeper into the tissue layers of the body, directly heating and energizing the cells of your body. This penetrating heat is able to increase your core temperature, stimulate deeper detoxification, and improve circulation. There are different types of infrared heat that have varying benefits.

Infrared light falls just outside of the visible spectrum of light. On the spectrum of light, red light falls into the visible part of the light spectrum between 630-700 nm wavelength and is used in red light therapy to treat the surface of the skin, repairing skin and reducing inflammation. Near infrared wavelengths are just below red light, between 700 and 1200 nm. This is the warming red light that heating lamps use. The longer the wavelength, the deeper the penetration to deliver energy to the cells, stimulating healing and relieving pain in the soft tissues and joints of your body. And at an even longer wavelength, far infrared energy has a wavelength of 3000nm to 1mm which can penetrate several inches into your body. Each cell and tissue type within our bodies also has its own unique light absorption methods and response to varying wavelengths. This means certain tissues have an affinity to absorbing certain kinds (wavelengths) of light.

Infrared saunas are growing in popularity. You can find them now in many health clubs and spas as well as many easy to install home units. I think they are growing in popularity due to the increased awareness of the many benefits, their efficiency of use compared to traditional saunas, and their lower temperatures which many people find more tolerable. People use infrared saunas and devices to support their body in both healing and detoxifying.

If you decide to purchase your own sauna for your home, there are many things to consider. The type of wood used, the processing of the wood and what off gasses it might produce, glues used, the EMF level coming from the heaters, and overall quality of construction are all factors, and if not taken into account, could produce negative effects and toxins that could detract from the healing benefits you are trying to gain from the sauna. There are many options and price ranges, so do your homework before buying. Also, look into the benefits of each type of sauna and determine which you might benefit most from.

**Near Infrared** supports skin rejuvenation and immune function and can have a healing effect on our individual cells. For example, inside the mitochondria of every cell are receptors which respond to near infrared wavelengths. The light triggers an increase in cell metabolism, protein synthesis (including collagen), and antioxidant activity.

**Far infrared** supports deeper detoxification, weight loss, and improved blood pressure. Because it penetrates several inches into your body and vibrates the cells, it raises your core temperature, quickens the detoxification process, enhances your natural metabolic processes, and increases circulation and oxygenation of tissues.

Some benefits people have reported from using infrared saunas on a regular basis:

- Improved thyroid function
- Stabilizing of blood sugar
- Improved flexibility
- Reduced pain and swelling
- Improved skin health
- Quicker wound healing
- Reduced pathogens in the body
- Weight loss

If you are looking for a simple way to detoxify, heal, and improve your overall quality of life, look into trying an infrared sauna or a variety of infrared light therapy. I think infrared saunas would be especially beneficial for those who are poor detoxifiers or who have certain health situations in which they can't exercise at an intensity to get a good sweat on a regular basis.

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