

# Cold water immersion

Ok so maybe you've been thinking what's all this cold water thing about? Why are people jumping into the sea, lochs and rivers when it's 'freezin'!? Are they all really mad?



That was me!!! Now I'm a convert and devoted to helping others enjoy the incredible benefits and experience as me ☺

I've pulled together some of my key take aways to help you prepare and stay safe.

**Disclaimer:** *If you suffer from any illnesses or conditions always consult your medical provider first*

## SO HERE'S JUST SOME OF THE MANY BENEFITS

- Gives you a natural high as the cold water and activates endorphins and endocannabinoids these are our feel good chemicals
- Improve your cardio vascular system
- Improved immunity

- Increased energy
- Reduces stress
- Reduces inflammation
- Increased metabolism – burns calories and increases our brown fat
- Reduce blood pressure
- Improves quality of sleep
- Improves lymphatic circulation
- Detoxifies the body
- Strengthens nervous system

## PREPARATION

You might want to start with cold showers and gradually build yourself up.

Have your shower then at the end turn the temperature to as cold as you can go for 15 seconds.

Increase the time and reduce the temperature each day until you build up to 2 min.

Before you reduce the temperature take a deep breath and exhale as you turn the temperature down.

Concentrate on your breath as you build up to the two minutes, what your body is experiencing. Breathe into the sensation.

On our retreats we go into much more detail behind the preparation and whole experience.

## TAKING THE PLUNGE!

Go in at your own pace, it's not a race. Again focus on your breath and the experience.

Remember our bodies natural reaction is to get out as fast as we can! It's our natural response, but stick with it. Aim to get through the first 2min, personally I found these to be the hardest, but once you get through this you'll get to experience the natural high as our adrenalin kicks in and all the endorphins (our feel good chemicals) start to release.

BEWARE! It's easy to get carried away! Keep note of your time, don't stay in longer than you should. An estimate is 1min per degree C. Do not go beyond this, as that's when you're in danger of after drop (see my later section devoted to this).

Once you get out you need to get warmed up, wet kit off and get dressed right away.

I like to find an area that's dry and sheltered.

\*\*\*See afterdrop on page 2\*\*\*

## RETREATS

If you're interested in joining one of my exclusive retreats email [heather@heatherashleyhealthfitness.com](mailto:heather@heatherashleyhealthfitness.com) to be put on our waiting list. You'll be the first to know of all our up and coming dates as soon as they're released.





# Going outdoors!

Ok so now you're ready to go for it outdoors! Whether it's a safe river, sea, loch or lake make sure you prepare.



## YOU'LL NEED:

- A buddy - go together and stay safe
- Swimmers
- Warm clothes
- Hat + gloves
- Towel
- Hot water bottle - top tip wrap your clothes up in the bottle so their cosy and warm when you get out of the water
- Warm drink
- Flask with warm water to pour over your hands and feet, note make sure it's not too hot!

## AFTERDROP & THE SUBTLE ART OF WARMING UP

How to cope with afterdrop and the best way to warm up safely

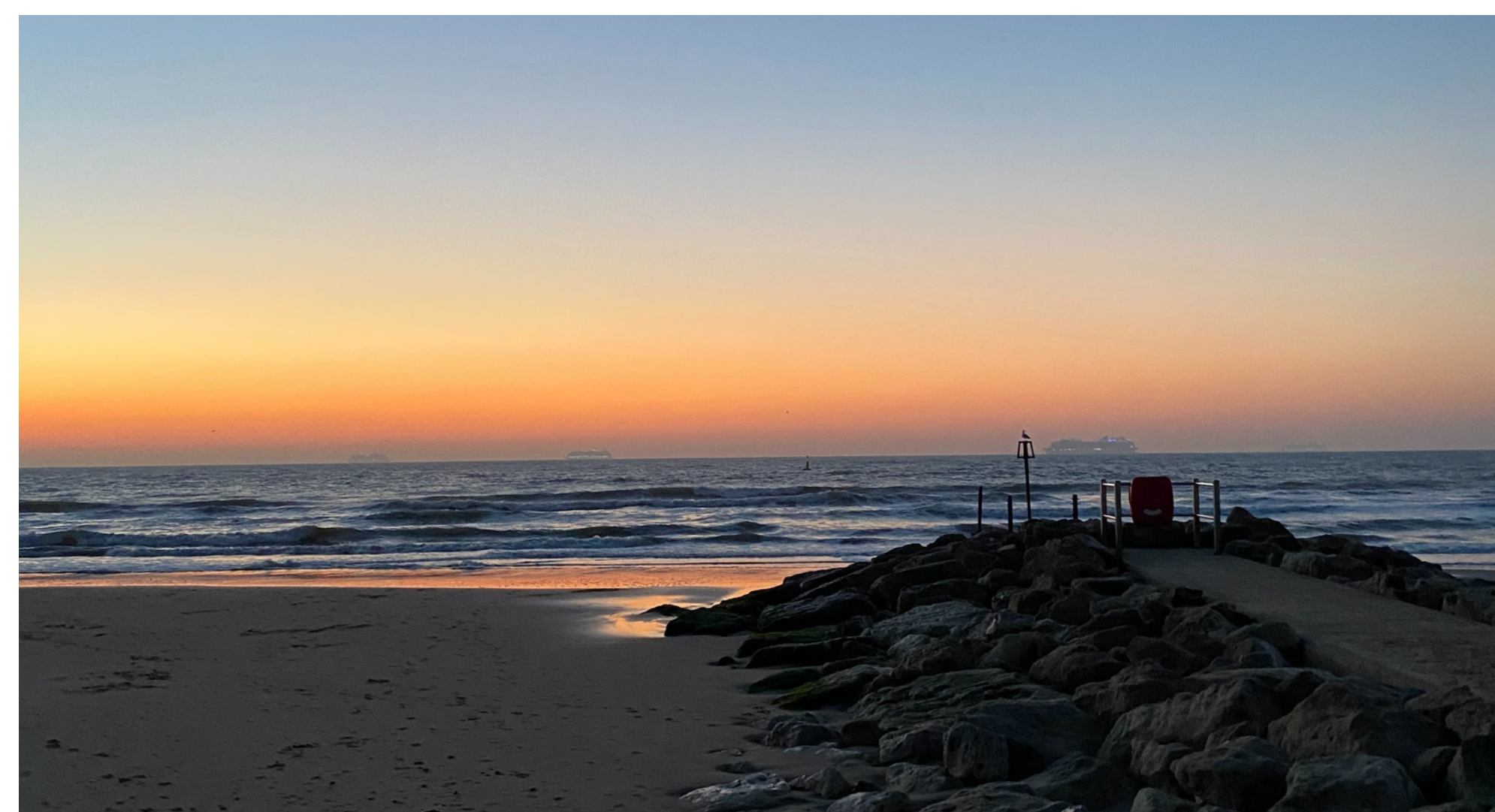
Afterdrop happens because when you swim, your body shuts down circulation to your skin, pooling

warm blood in your core. This process helps you stay in the water longer: with reduced circulation to your peripheries skin and sub-cutaneous fat is turned into a thermal layer, similar to a natural wetsuit - hence the wild swimmers' term bioprene for fat.

But as you start to warm up, this process reverses: blood starts to recirculate in your extremities and peripheral blood vessels, cooling as it travels.

You can lose up to 4.5°C from your core temperature (according to Golden and Tipton, Essentials of Sea Survival), bringing on shivering, hypothermia, or feeling faint and unwell.

The key to warming up and staying well is to warm up slowly and gradually. If you attempt to rush it by, for example, having a warm shower or bath, you will draw the warm blood that has pooled in your core to the skin at speed, leading to rapid cooling. You will quite likely faint as your temperature plummets along with your blood pressure.



## HOW TO WARM UP

- To minimise the risk of afterdrop, dress immediately starting with the top half of your body. Put on a hat and gloves and have a warm (non-alcoholic) drink.
- Dry yourself off ASAP - remove all wet layers
- Don layers of warm clothing including a woolly hat and gloves. Silver foil blankets do not help swimmers - unlike runners, for example, swimmers are not radiating heat post swim, so there is no escaping heat for the silver foil blanket to trap.
- Sip a warm drink: this helps warm the body gently from the inside.
- Eat something: sugar will help raise body temperature.
- Sit in a warm environment: in the absence of more salubrious spaces, cars, with heaters on full, are popular with channel swimmers.
- If you feel okay, walk around to generate body heat. It can take some time to warm properly.
- If you feel unwell at this stage, sit down somewhere warm.
- If you feel okay, walk around to generate body heat. It can take some time to warm properly.

