

# Infrared Sauna Therapy for Pain Relief

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All participants experienced reduced pain and improved mood, but Group B showed a significantly greater reduction in anger than Group A, and a higher percentage of individuals in Group B had returned to work two years after treatment.

## Practice Benefits

This clinical evidence suggesting decreased pain, increased mobility and productivity, and improved mood convinced me to acquire a full-spectrum infrared sauna for my wellness center. As part of any pain-relief treatment plan, I offer 30-minute sauna sessions to patients for \$35 each. Some patients come in every single day to sweat. I can book up to 16 sauna sessions per day in an eight-hour workday, so the ROI has been plentiful, to say the least.

Patients who are interested in detoxification can also book sauna sessions at my clinic. Neurologist Dr. Deitrich Klinghardt found that the sweat of people using a conventional sauna was 95-97 percent water while the sweat of those using an infrared sauna was 80-85 percent water, with the non-water portion being cholesterol, fat-soluble toxins, toxic heavy metals, sulfuric acid, sodium, ammonia and uric acid. The reason that infrared saunas offer 10 times the detoxification benefits of infrared heat is that the infrared light waves penetrate deep into tissues and cells, micro-vibrating and encouraging toxins to be expelled.

Finally, I offer sauna sessions to patients who are interested in weight loss; again, the clinical evidence has been solid. A recent 2010 study in the *Canadian Journal of Diabetes* states that infrared saunas are a valid intervention for congestive heart failure, hypertension and obesity. The researchers found that infrared sauna treatment significantly lowered blood pressure and induced weight loss, significantly reducing waist circumference, especially for patients forced to be sedentary due to medical conditions.

The reason I purchased a full-spectrum infrared sauna for my practice is that I can control the settings, ranging from near-infrared light that aids in pain and muscle relief, to mid-infrared light that assists in fat burning and weight loss, to far-infrared light that deepens the core sweat and is whole-body detoxifying. Most infrared saunas on the market offer only far-infrared heat, which does not have such a profound effect on pain relief, the number-one reason my clinic books sauna sessions.

The second reason why I bought a full-spectrum infrared sauna for my office is for pure self-indulgence! Sometimes at the end of a long day of seeing patients, I crave that long, deep, relaxing sweat to unwind. Infrared heat feels soothing and nourishing, because it is invisible light being absorbed into the body, as opposed to just baking in a hot room like normal saunas. The best way I can describe the sensation of being in an infrared sauna is that it is like lying on sun-warmed sand.

It also helps that I am not the first chiropractor to tout the benefits of infrared heat. Dr. Jeffrey Spencer, 2004 Sports Chiropractor of the Year and former Olympic athlete, believes that the regular use of an infrared sauna is essential in promoting muscle recovery, reducing tension and eliminating performance inhibiting toxic burdens from the body. Dr. Spencer has worked with many high-performance athletes over the years including Lance Armstrong, Chad Reed, Troy Glaus, Tiger Woods and Bobby LaBonte.

When asked about his personal health routine in a *Dynamic Chiropractic* article, he said, "I make deliberate time to exercise daily, beginning with 45 minutes of qigong before the sun comes up, followed by at least an hour of cycling during the day. I also do full-body resistive training daily, take supplements specific to my needs, get regular adjustments, do Thai/Chinese massage, eat a calorie-restrictive organic diet, (and sweat in an) infrared sauna."

I am so pleased to offer full-spectrum infrared sauna treatment to my patients who experience chronic pain, knowing that they are also benefiting from the detox, cardiovascular, weight-loss and relaxation elements. Given that their full-spectrum sauna treatments are easily controlled on a touch-screen LCD in the sauna, patients can come in for pain relief even on days when my receptionist is there and I'm not in the office, which is a huge relief to them and me.

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**Dr. Michelle Robin** is the founder and chief wellness officer of Your Wellness Connection, a holistic healing center in Kansas. Honored as the Masters Circle's Chiropractor of the Year in 2007, Dr. Robin is a regular contributing writer for *Flourish!* magazine (for executive business women) and many other community publications focusing on health and wellness. She is also the author of the book *Wellness on a Shoestring — Seven Habits for a Healthy Life* .

