

Saunas may give your heart a healthy boost

Getting hot and sweaty can release 'happiness molecules'

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A study has found that people with chronic heart failure who took five saunas a week for three weeks enjoyed improved heart function and a boost in their exercise endurance. New research reveals a surprising new therapeutic benefit to relaxing in a sauna: getting hot and sweaty can not only release "happiness molecules" but also help your heart.

This week British science magazine [New Scientist](#) reported on the research, which found that people with chronic heart failure who took fives saunas a week for three weeks enjoyed improved heart function and a boost in their exercise endurance.

In the study, researcher [Takashi Ohori](#) and colleagues at the University of Toyama in Japan asked 41 volunteers with heart failure to take a 15-minute sauna fives time a week. After the sauna treatment, participants were asked to wrap themselves in a blanket for 30 minutes to keep their body temperatures about 1 °C higher than normal.

"Sauna treatment increased the heart's ability to pump blood, and boosted the distance participants could walk in 6 minutes from 337 metres to 379 metres," wrote New Scientist.

The researchers also found improved function in the membrane lining the inside of the heart, which plays a role in controlling the diameter of blood vessels. The findings were published in *The American Journal of Cardiology*.

Thanks to the increase in body temperature, separate research has found that a sauna treatment can trigger neurons in your body to release serotonin, resulting in a feel-good sensation.