



Kristen McElveen, ND  
Bare Medicine  
460 Main St, Ste 2  
Springvale, ME 04083

Ph 207-490-2373  
Fax 207-459-1002  
kristenmcelveennd.com

---

### **Alternating Foot Bath**

Alternating hot and cold foot baths involve the immersion of the feet alternately into hot and cold water. This treatment will reduce pain locally and in distal parts. It will also increase circulation to the area and increase immunity, nutrition, and lymph drainage.

#### **Indications**

Alternating hot and cold foot baths are used to treat infections, arthritis, venous stasis ulcers, fractures, edema, and injuries including sprains, strains, and bruises after 24 hours.

#### **Contraindications**

Do not use alternating hot and cold foot baths in persons with cancer, vascular disease including diabetes, diminished sensation, or hemorrhage.

#### **Caution**

Always finish with a short cold bath except in persons with rheumatoid arthritis whose condition is aggravated by cold. End treatment with warm bath in this case.

#### **Supplies**

2 basins or tubs for feet	Hot water
Bath thermometer	Cold water
Towels	Cold compress for head

#### **Directions**

- ☞ Prepare a tub with hot water at 105-110 degrees F. Do not exceed 120 degrees. This temperature is slightly hotter than the average hot tub. Prepare alternate tub with cold water at 45 degrees F.
- ☞ Immerse feet in tub with hot water for 3 minutes.
- ☞ After 3 minutes, change feet to cold foot bath and immerse feet for 30 seconds.
- ☞ Make three complete changes between the hot and cold tubs (3x-hot/3x-cold).
- ☞ Always start the treatment with the hot bath and finish treatment with the cold bath.
- ☞ If you start sweating, place a cold compress on your forehead.
- ☞ Dry feet thoroughly and rest in bed for at least 30 minutes.
- ☞ Add hot water to the hot tub if the temperature falls below 105 degrees.
- ☞ The greater the contrast between the hot and cold water, the stronger the treatment.
- ☞ Place disinfectant such as betadyne, vinegar, hypericum, or calendula tincture in water if treating an infected wound.

Reference: Boyle, Wade, ND, and Saine, André, ND, Lectures in Naturopathic Hydrotherapy, (East Palastine, OH: Buckeye Naturopathic Press) 1988.