

# Alternate Footbath

An alternate footbath involves the use of two bowls of water (one hot, one cold) into which the patient's feet are placed alternatively. The experience of moving between temperatures creates a sensory experience that gently awakens an inner equilibrium that particularly supports the Sense of Balance and the Sense of Warmth. It also helps to increase circulation, immunity and lymphatic drainage.

## Instructions

Fill one bucket 2/3 full with water below body temperature like water in a cold pool. If doing this in a very hot climate you may need to use iced water from the refrigerator. Fill the other bucket 2/3 full with water above body temperature, but not so hot as to burn. The water temperature in each bucket will blend throughout the activity, so have a cold and hot supply ready to top up the buckets

Position the buckets on towels in front of a chair or stool, or in a water resistant area that is also in a moderate to warm environment. Remember the patient's feet must be able to reach the bottom of the bucket. Manage the impact of the outside temperature by covering the shoulders with a towel or blanket if the room temperature is below about 25°C (75 °F)

The patient's legs must be unrestricted and bare so that they are comfortable and clothing will remain dry.

Place the feet in the **warm** water for 2 – 3 mins, then immediately into the cold for 1 min. Then back into the hot for 2 – 3 mins and so on for about 3 sets. Finish in the **warm** water. Maintain the water temperature with each change.

Thoroughly dry the feet and legs and cover with socks. Rest.

## Equipment

### Hot water

### Cold Water

### Two bowls/ buckets

Such as large laundry-style buckets or very large stainless steel bowls that are wide enough for two feet and deep enough for the water to cover over the ankles towards the calves.

*Children find this a fun activity. The parent need not explain the therapeutic effect to children as this may influence how the children experience it for themselves.*

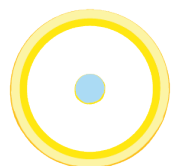
*After having treatments that bring harmony to the sensory system, it is always best to rest for a little while to allow the treatment to be integrated.*

### Caution!

Do not use footbaths if a fever is present

For more information on sensory development visit

[www.developingtheself.org](http://www.developingtheself.org)



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