

# Hot Tip for Pain Relief Plus



Health Matters

By Kerry Sauser

In the course of my practice, I see patients with all types of health concerns, many of them chronic conditions accompanied by pain or toxicity. Such patients may take a variety of medications, and hesitate to add yet another due to side effects or potential drug interactions. In such cases—and many others—the age old practice of taking a sauna may provide effective, drug-free pain relief, as well as other benefits.

Saunas have long been used by Scandinavians, Japanese and native cultures throughout the world for their healing qualities, but until recently, most Americans have been unfamiliar with the many benefits of saunas. In the last few decades, awareness has changed, and saunas are now recognized as serious health support—thanks in part to comfortable, effective far infrared models that were developed in the mid-60's. Just as in traditional saunas, the far infrared models raise the internal body temperature to achieve health results, but they do so more effectively, and in greater comfort for the user.

Research data and user reports are telling us that far infrared saunas have significant, and sometimes

surprising, health advantages. Far infrared sauna use has been shown to improve many types of conditions, with special promise for pain relief and cardiovascular conditions. The far infrared wavelength of the sauna increases blood supply and oxygen to tissues and in doing so delivers more nutrients to repair damaged or inflamed tissues. At the same time, the increased circulation carries away cellular waste and environmental toxins faster and more efficiently. The end result seems to be faster healing and recovery from aches, pains and illness for the sauna user. Those with pain from arthritis, muscle sprains or strains, fibromyalgia, bursitis and even some forms of cancer have reported improvement after using far infrared saunas. People with arthritis and joint impairment commonly report decreases in pain and joint stiffness, while achieving better flexibility and increased range of movement.

Even celebrity doctor Mehmet Oz recognized far infrared advantages when interviewed in a 2009 segment of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. He cited benefits that include reduced blood pressure, increased metabolism (calorie burning) and detoxification. Clinical research reinforces those observations. Dr Sasaki Kyuo, MD, author of "[The Scientific Basis and Therapeutic Benefits of Far Infrared Ray Therapy](#)" states that far infrared therapy also has a supportive effect on white blood cell function, and is effective treatment for colds, bronchitis, asthma, sinusitis, eczema, psoriasis, burns, and difficult to heal wounds. This may be in part due to the favorable in-

fluence that far infrared has on the immune and lymph systems and its professed anti-microbial effect. (It has been suggested that the sauna's ability to penetrate and raise internal temperatures can kill microbial invaders like bacteria and viruses.) These properties seem to aid in healing infections and dealing with autoimmune disorders.

Detoxification is another commonly discussed benefit of far infrared, with reports of 9-20 times greater elimination of heavy metals than conventional saunas. The detoxification process occurs through the skin during sauna use. This relieves the load on other detoxification pathways, especially the gastro-intestinal tract, which is often overtaxed in people with chronic illnesses. Detoxifying via the skin also helps to avoid many of the undesirable side effects of conventional detoxification approaches, such as nausea and fatigue.

Far infrared saunas may even make us appear more youthful. Regular sauna users report improvements in skin tone and elasticity, with significant improvements in skin smoothness. At higher temperatures, deep pore cleansing occurs to remove pore clogging cosmetics and for the same reason may benefit those with acne. Calories are burned in a far infrared session, and because toxins bind to fat, toxin removal is said to reduce cellulite as well. And finally, far infrared therapy is a great stress reliever. The penetrating heat is soothing and relaxing—enhancing sleep, reducing headaches and balancing the nervous system.

So if you are looking to relieve pain, improve a health condition, combat stress, or simply look and feel more youthful, the ease and comfort of a far infrared

sauna may be for you. It's a hot new approach to an ancient wellness option.

Until next month...Heal well, be well...naturally!

K.S.

(Dr. Kerry Sauser, ARNP, ND, PhD, practices functional health care at the Natural Health Center in Atlantic. Her offices are located in the Complementary Care Center at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Linn Street. The CCC is open to the public and hosts a natural food store, and health care services including, massage, Ortho-Bionomy, digital thermography, reflexology, hypnosis, acupuncture and far-infrared sauna therapy.)