

RUNNING SHORTS

How every runner can benefit from cryotherapy

By Ken Johnson

Cryotherapy is the use of sub-zero temperatures as a therapeutic measure. It has been around for a long time. The Egyptians used it as far back as 2,500 BC to reduce inflammation and pain associated with injury.

Fast forward to modern times. With the development of liquified gases to achieve sub-zero temperatures, cryotherapy has been used to treat many ailments, to include removal of warts and skin cancers.

Whole body cryotherapy was developed in Japan in the 1970's. It is a system that subjects the entire body to sub-zero temperatures. It was brought to Europe in the 80's and to the United States in the last decade.

Up until recently, whole body cryotherapy was only available to elite runners and other athletes. Now, it is available to everyone. Several cryotherapy centers have opened in The Woodlands area and Arctic Cryotherapy has recently opened in Huntsville.

For a whole body cryotherapy treatment, the athlete stands in a chamber up to their neck, wearing only shorts, socks and gloves. Nitrogen vapor is released in the chamber, bringing the temperature down to about minus 200 to 300 degrees Fahrenheit for 2 to 3 minutes. The initial treatment will be on the low end of the temperature and duration range. Once out of the chamber, the body immediately reheats.

Exposure to extreme cold causes a survival response in the body and this releases endorphins that have analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties. When the skin surface cools quickly, blood shunts from the extremities to protect the vital organs. The period of treatment is not long enough to cause trauma, but is long enough to stimulate the brain to scan all areas of the body that may not be functioning to their fullest capacity. When the cryotherapy session is over, enriched blood goes to the extremities, resulting in a rejuvenation of the entire system.

Among other benefits, whole body cryotherapy accelerates muscle recovery and decreases muscle soreness, pain, inflammation, fatigue and injury recovery time.

Serious runners can probably benefit from cryotherapy, especially if they are training for or recovering from a marathon or ultra-marathon or just need a competitive edge.

Recreational runners, who run two or three days a week and an occasional 5K race, would probably not benefit from the treatment, unless they leave their comfort zone and need relief from soreness and inflammation.

Depending where you go, expect to pay at least \$40 per whole body cryotherapy treatment. It might be less if there is an introductory offer or price break for multiple treatments.

Speaking of someone who may need cryotherapy, Huntsville's Monica Lopez, 33, ran her first marathon in Groveton last week. She completed the 26.2-mile course in 5 hours, 6 minutes and 57 seconds. Congratulations.

Recent race results:

Sunday Night 5K, The Woodlands, May 1

Ken Johnson, 74 36:52

Santo de Mayo 5K, Houston, May 1

William Kuhn, 57 24:28

Vanessa Mundorff, 41 26:34

Candace Prater, 48 28:13

Amanda Nowlin-O'Bannon, 40 29:11

Matt Henke, 44 30:21

Sherry Henke, 50 40:29

Christene Hughes, 29 47:05

Wildflower 10K, Fredericksburg, Apr. 30

Steve Bickford, 55 46:24

Cathy Bickford, 54 1:17:39

Madrid Marathon, Madrid, Spain, Apr. 24

Maria Wicker, 51 5:11:08

GermanFest 5K, Muenster, Apr. 24

Carter Helm, 70 35:24

Texas 10 Series Sienna, Missouri City, Apr. 24

10 Miles

Jason Wallace, 41 1:07:53

Jose Torres, 23 1:08:51

Steve Bickford, 55 1:20:36

Steve Allen, 43 1:20:43

Ray Sarno, 69 1:53:45

Ken Johnson, 74 2:13:22

5 Miles

Francisco Manzanares, 16 35:50

Jill Blake, 37 50:10

Cathy Bickford, 54 1:00:19

Diana Sarno, 54 1:04:35

Cindy Pate, 55 1:06:02

Divas Half Marathon, Galveston, Apr. 24

Laura Green, 50 2:21:41

Danelle Scotka, 58 2:28:05

Kristen Hooten, 39 2:37:44

Angela Lyons, 42 2:37:45

Nikki Paul, 43 3:14:43
Rhonda Reddoch, 42 3:14:46

5K

Jacque Hausingel, 30 29:03
Laurie McLaren, 44 34:54
Malissa Mims, 37 35:35
Mara Burson, 37 37:29
Michelle Herbert, 52 42:50
Miriam Hensen, 41 44:01
Amanda Baggerley, 36 49:35
Helen Teetz, 64 50:01
Sue Slater, 55 50:20
Diana Leonard, 44 52:10
Marissa Ledesma, 45 52:11
Natasha Davis, 44 54:05
Jacquelyn Shair, 46 1:12:59
Rachel Kulhavy, 48 1:13:01

Wine & Roses Half Marathon, Bryan, Apr. 24

Elaine Minton, 58 2:40:44

5K

Misty Lampson, 43 34:42
Connie Mathis, 44 34:42
April Payne, 37 38:09
Jennifer Langley, 59 42:18
Jessica Twardeski, 35 1:00:39

Bear Chase Marathon, Groveton, Apr. 23

Monica Lopez, 33 5:06:57

Half Marathon

Dan Byrne, 57 1:27:21
Julie Simmons, 41 2:32:16

Buffalo Bayou Brewery Run, 3.6 Mile, Houston, Apr. 23

Ken Johnson, 74 46:37

Run the Woodlands 5K, The Woodlands, Apr. 23

Shea Sawyer, 34 21:16
Donna Fabian, 41 24:49
Ken Johnson, 74 36:40

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

May 21 – Five-0 and 1-Mile Color Run, Hospital area
May 30 – Memorial Day 5K & 1-Mile, Timberwilde Sub-division
June 18 – June Bug 5K & 1-Mile, Spring Lake Sub-division
June 19 – Gator Bait Trail Run, 15K & 5K, Huntsville State Park

For more information about these races and others in the area, visit the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us> and click on Race Schedule.