Could Water Therapy Help Your Rheumatoid Arthritis Symptoms?

by AMY MANLEY

The Benefits of Water Therapy for RA

There's a variety of treatment methods for RA, but a favorite among many patients is the use of water therapy. Water therapy not only offers physical relief, but is emotionally satisfying, allowing the patient with RA to relax which leads to additional healing.

Not many people realize that water therapy is one of the oldest forms of medicine. By learning more about how water therapy works for RA, you can determine if this form of therapy is right for your individual needs.

About the Use of Water

Water has been used as an effective healing tool since the ancient times. It is one of the oldest forms of medicine available, and for good reason, yet many people look past its healing properties. According to researchers, water therapy offers a lot of benefits for the skeletal system and the muscles, which is one of the reasons it's commonly used as an effective form of therapy for RA.

Water makes you feel better all around, by reducing pain that is difficult to manage with other forms of therapy, including strong prescription pain medications. It can also help to reduce stress and anxiety. Additionally, water works for a prolonged period of time, offering its benefits for several days upon completion of water therapy.

Using Water Therapy for RA

RA puts a lot of pressure on the joints, and when you use water therapy for rheumatoid arthritis, the force of gravity is taken off the joints, eliminating the compression. When the compression is taken off the joints, it offers relief from both swelling and inflammation, along with increasing circulation.

When using water therapy for RA, experts say that you must soak in water for at least 20 minutes to receive beneficial results. The water can be used alone, or along with salt or soak in order to provide additional benefits. Experts say it's also important to drink plenty of water before submersion and afterwards, as soaking in water can be dehydrating.

Making the Most of Water Therapy

- **Use warm water –** It's important to always use warm water, rather than hot, and ideally the water should be around 92 degrees. When water is too warm, it'll cause stress on the joints, rather than relaxing them. Additionally, those with cardiovascular problems could put themselves at risk if water is too warm, as it puts additional stress on the heart.
- **Move around –** While it's tempting to spend your time in the water simply relaxing, experts say it's important to move around during water therapy, as movement helps the water to stimulate blood flow to your muscles and joints, working to offer the highest level of benefits.

- **Use salt –** As mentioned, some people enjoy using salts in their bath, and there’s good reason. Salt contains high levels of magnesium, an essential mineral for overall optimum health, specifically heart and bone health. By adding salt to your water, you’re able to boost your magnesium levels by around 35 percent.
- **Choose a larger body of water –** The tub can work fine if needed, but some experts say choosing a larger area of water offers a higher level of benefits because it allows for more leg room. Moving around in a warm pool is much easier than moving around in the bathtub.