



Ice Baths!

Whenever your muscles are feeling a bit sore or overworked, you should remember my motto: **“Ice Early, Ice Often!”** Arguably, one of the most effective ways to ice your muscles is to immerse them in an ice bath. Ice baths will assist with your healing and recovery after your long run, an interval session, a real fast tempo run or even a hill workout!

An ice bath can range from dumping a bag of ice into a bucket of water or your bathtub to using an actual, full-sized whirlpool. With a bucket, you can immerse your feet. With a whirlpool, you can immerse as much of your body as you need.

In general, you should not immerse more of your body than you have to in order to completely immerse the sore muscles in water. If you are new to using an ice bath, you will probably not be able to stay immersed for more than a minute or two. As you get used to it, though, you will be able to increase your immersion time up to 5 or 10 minutes. You should never stay immersed for more than 10 minutes at a time.

The theory behind the ice bath is that your muscles constrict and the blood flow is diverted to your deeper muscles close to the bone to keep them safe in the extreme cold temperature. When you take your leg or body out of the ice bath, fresh blood rushes through that does not have any of the chemicals released by your muscles as you ripped and tore them during exercise, such as lactic acid. This speeds up the healing process.

In general, using an ice bath is an activity that should be done as soon after your workout as possible. Once you get out of the bath, you should do some gentle stretching and warm your muscles back up. And once you're out of the bath, do not get back in.

So, what do I do for my ice baths? I fill a large, plastic garbage pail about 3/4 with cold water from the hose, add ice, wait about 10 minutes for the ice to cool the water and then jump in and stand in the ice water for about 10 minutes. To make ice, I use 2 litre, plastic pop bottles. I cut off the tops of the bottles, fill them about 9/10 full of water and then place them in the freezer.

To maintain clean water in your pail, you have two options:

1. Dump the water in your garden after you've finished, rinse out the pail and refill it the next time you take an ice bath.
2. Dump a tiny amount of “kiddie pool” chlorine into the water. This helps keep the water clean for a few weeks.

So, find a type of ice bath that works for you and **“Ice Early, Ice Often!”**

RUN!

Benny