

WARMING SOCKS HYDROTHERAPY: Water Cure for the Common Cold

The Warming Sock Treatment is an old traditional hydrotherapy (aka "water cure") modality originating in use in Europe, centuries ago. It is a simple technique that is especially effective for relieving nasal congestion in bed at night; frequently better than medications and without the side effects. It also helps to stimulate the immune system in the upper respiratory tract, is relaxing for aches and chills, and helps bring on a more restful night's sleep when sick.¹

Warming socks may be helpful in such conditions as the common cold, the "flu" (not the "stomach flu"), earaches, sore throats, and sinus infections. It is useful with people of any age, from infants to the elderly. By increasing blood flow or circulation, an increase in lymphatic drainage and white blood cells occurs, which is necessary for fighting infection and recovering from symptoms.²

The Warming Sock Treatment is especially good to use with nasal congestion, and upper respiratory tract symptoms associated with the "common cold" and influenza.

What you need:

- 1 pair of thin cotton socks
- 1 pair of thick wool socks
- Basin or tub filled with warm water

Step 1: Soak the cotton socks in cold tap water, or ice water and wring them out thoroughly. Place the socks close to the basin or bathtub used in the next step.

Note: If your feet are already warm (e.g., you have already been in bed, or you are doing this on a small baby) you can skip to Step 3.

Step 2: Soak feet in basin or bathtub of warm water for a few minutes, until feet are hot and pink.

Step 3. Remove your feet from the warm water and quickly dry them off. Immediately put on the cold wet cotton socks. Put the dry wool socks on over the wet cotton socks.

Step 4. Go directly to bed and keep the feet covered in your blankets throughout the night.

When the Warming Sock Treatment is followed correctly the feet will start warming up within a few minutes of getting covered in bed. The congestion will usually start to be relieved within 30 minutes.³ It will often work better than a decongestant or antihistamine to relieve congestion during sleep. In addition, it is not uncommon to see a small child or infant fall immediately to sleep after they are put to bed with the Warming Socks. After approximately four hours the cotton socks should be totally dry, the feet warm, and the symptoms will be much improved (if not gone).⁴

If you find you are not drying out the cotton socks within 1 hour, likely they were not wrung out enough to start. Start over, and repeat all 4 steps. If necessary the Warming Sock Treatment can be repeated through the night or used on consecutive nights. In repeating the treatment in the same night or if an illness starts during the night, it is not necessary to warm the feet in hot water since they will already be warm. Simply apply the wrung out cold wet socks and the dry wool socks and go back to your cozy bed.

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydrotherapy>

² <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26170591>

³ <http://www.pnas.org/content/110/30/12480.abstract>

⁴ <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/12/131206101611.htm>