

# WELLBEING COLD BATH

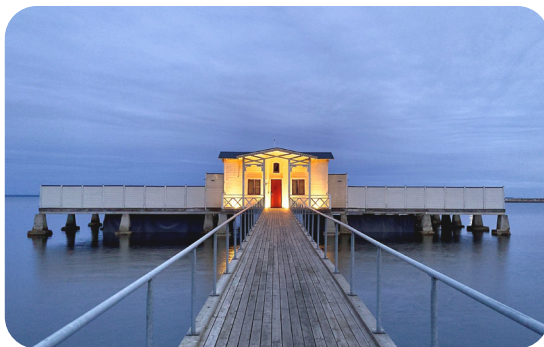


## Enjoy a magical cold bath, winter, or ice swim

Allow nature to embrace you and become awake by the cold water. To take a cold bath or go on a winter swim gives you a wonderful possibility to connect with nature. Take care of yourself, get resilience training, and be in a happy place - all at the same time. If you are blessed with having a quiet forest lake or a widespread beach to relax on, you can create a calm place for a wellbeing cold bath.

Strengthen your health by an energetic cold swim. Many studies show that winter bathers are healthier and have significantly fewer days with sick leave than others. The body cools down extremely fast in the icy water which triggers its defence system, causing a stress reaction where the blood vessels contract, the blood flow in the brain is reduced and it is this reaction that triggers endorphins and adrenaline that helps reduce the risk for depression. The list of beneficial effects is long; you may obtain improved stress management, increased general mental wellbeing, improved sleep, increased blood circulation, lower blood pressure, and reduced susceptibility to infections. You may also increase your self-esteem and reach a significantly greater tolerance for cold.

Even though cold bathing increases the general wellbeing of many people, it is not for everyone. Always talk to your doctor first if you have high blood sugar, high blood pressure, or heart disease.



## PREPARATIONS

**Place:** in a lake or in the sea. It is also possible to use an unheated pool.

**Time:** 0,5-1 hour, but you only stay in the water a short amount of time.

### **Preparations for a cold bath or swimming:**

- Always swim with others, bring one or more friends.
- Bath in daylight- it can be difficult to see if it is dark outside and in the water.
- Stay within your abilities – for new bathers, ensure you reach the bottom or stay by the ladder.
- Only bathe when you are well – avoid bathing if you have been drinking alcohol, taking strong medications or feel dizzy.

### **To bring along:**

- Swimwear, towel, and maybe a warm bath poncho or bathrobe to use when you change into dry underwear, or a thermos with a warm drink.
- Gloves to wear when you bathe. The bars to the steps may be cold.
- A bag in a water-resistant material so that your clothes, towel, etc. stay dry.
- A thermometer if you are curious about the temperature of the water.
- A large and thick jacket and warm shoes to wear when you walk home.
- Slippers or a seat pad so you easily can stand on the cold pier.
- Knitted wool hat to wear when you bathe.



# HOW TO COLD BATHE



## **Prepare yourself, slow down and focus**

The nature and the landscape calm down during the autumn as it is getting ready for the winter rest. This brings peacefulness, and we can also allow ourselves to slow down and welcome a more relaxing lifestyle.

## **To slow down before the bath focus on your breathing**

“Very slowly, inhale a long breath through your nose. Concentrate on filling the lower part of your lungs by allowing your belly to expand. Hold your breath and count to four. Exhale slowly through your lips and focus on relaxing your shoulders, facial muscles, and abdomen.”

- 1.** Take a few deep breaths then quietly climb down into the water. Submerge your body neck-deep into the cold water. If you are cold bathing in a tub, try to sit down, hold on to something, and keep your hands and feet above the water.
- 2.** The first seconds can be a challenge if you are not used to the cold. Keep on taking deep breaths and give your body time to calm down and adjust to the temperature. For some it helps to close their eyes and embrace the cold and the water.
- 3.** You can stay for 5, 10 or 30 seconds. Have respect for the cold bath experience and let your body slowly get used to the cold. Experienced swimmers may after silently treading for a few seconds, swim a few feet from the ladder. When you are ready, silently make your way back up from the water.

## **The experience**

Right after a cold bath, when you get up, you can feel numb in the legs, thighs, and buttocks. At the same time, the body can feel as if it has just been refreshed and strengthened. During the rest of the day, it can be a good idea to stay active, so you keep warm.

## **Tips**

Remember it is your choice if you want to take a dip or if you want to swim.

Challenge yourself and make every day “a dip day” for a whole year- everyday rituals are very powerful. To be prepared, start preferably before the end of October to get used to successively colder temperatures.

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<sup>1</sup>The image of ‘dipping’ oneself in the water suggests more of a spontaneous or brief swim compared to using the verb bada or simma. Simma is usually reserved for talking about swimming with a purpose, for example, if you’re going from shoreline to an island or doing laps in a pool, while bada refers to swimming for leisure. Bada also implies spending a long time in the water, while ett dopp can be used even if you literally just jump in and get straight back out. So in some places, the water might not be warm enough to bada, but it’s perfect if you just want to ta ett dopp.

