

## WELLNESS BENEFITS OF COLD PLUNGING

Beyond raising funds, Saint James's annual Polar Plunge is an excellent opportunity to highlight wellness practices and encourage people of all ages to embrace cold plunging safely. Cold plunging, whether jumping into the ocean or immersing yourself in cold water at home, has grown in popularity for its many health benefits. It can be a wellness boost for individuals of all ages!



### COLD PLUNGING MAY:

1. **BOOST CIRCULATION:** The sudden exposure to cold stimulates blood flow, which can help improve cardiovascular health.
2. **REDUCE INFLAMMATION:** Cold water can reduce swelling and inflammation in muscles and joints, aiding recovery after physical activity.
3. **SUPPORT MENTAL RESILIENCE:** The shock of cold water can train your mind to handle discomfort, reducing stress and improving focus.
4. **ENHANCE MOOD:** Exposure to cold water triggers the release of endorphins, boosting overall happiness.
5. **STRENGTHEN IMMUNITY:** Regular exposure to cold can increase white blood cell count and improve your body's ability to fight illness.
6. **IMPROVE SLEEP QUALITY:** Cold plunging can help regulate your nervous system, promoting better rest.

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### HOW TO SAFELY COLD PLUNGE AT HOME:

1. **PREPARATION:**
  - Start with short exposure (e.g., 15 seconds in a cold shower) and gradually increase time (to 30 seconds, 45, 1-minute, etc.).
  - Ensure the water temperature is between 50–59°F for a safe plunge. Always have a warm towel and dry clothes nearby.
2. **THE PROCESS:**
  - Fill a bathtub or kiddie pool with cold water, or use your shower on its coldest setting.
  - Step in gradually, submerging up to your neck if comfortable.
  - Breathe deeply and stay for 1-3 minutes.
  - Warm up slowly afterward with layers and a warm drink.
3. **FREQUENCY:** You can practice in the shower each day with short exposures to cold water. For plunging, start with 2-3 times a week and adjust as you get more comfortable.

### COLD PLUNGING FOR ALL AGES:

Cold plunging offers unique benefits across all age groups. For kids and teens, it fosters mental resilience and encourages a playful connection to nature. Adults can use cold plunging as a natural way to aid muscle recovery, manage stress, and boost energy levels. Older adults may find it helpful for supporting circulation and joint health, but it's essential to seek guidance to ensure safety.

### WHO SHOULD AVOID COLD PLUNGING:

While cold plunging can be beneficial, it's not for everyone. Individuals with heart conditions or circulation issues, such as Raynaud's syndrome, should avoid it or consult a doctor before trying. Children should always have supervision during cold exposure, as their bodies may react differently to extreme temperatures. Additionally, pregnant women should consult a healthcare provider to determine if cold plunging is safe for them.