

CHILL OUT

Would you endure sub-zero temperatures for better health and wellness? *MAXIM's SHONAGH WALKER* trials the hyper-cooling treatment taking over the world...

If the likes of Jessica Alba, Cristiano Ronaldo, Ben Stiller, Hugh Jackman and Daniel Craig are putting something into practice daily, we reckon it must be awesome. After all, they're great examples of fit, fabulous humans. This is partly down to regular Cryo-therapy (aka Cryo), a new wellness trend making big waves worldwide. Cryo involves exposing the skin to extremely cold, dry air (-140°C) for one to three minutes. It uses liquid nitrogen to safely achieve the sub-zero temps.

Why do this? Aside from general health improvements, Cryo is useful in managing chronic pain, arthritis or muscle soreness, and it's great for recovery, weight loss and skin rejuvenation. "The extreme temperatures trigger the release of anti-inflammatory molecules and endorphins, increase oxygenation of the blood and flush toxins," explains Peter Watson, from Cryo Fitness in Penrith, NSW, during my first session.

My sciatic nerve is paining me and I'm pretty hungover, so I eagerly step inside the chamber, naked, aside from my underwear, a pair of woolly mittens and Ugg boots. The cold mist engulfs me and I become a giant goose bump. It is cold but bearable. By the 90-second mark it is really cold, but I am OK — I can literally feel my skin toning up. At around two minutes, it gets even colder and feels like tiny shards of glass are pelting my flesh. By this stage I'm not sure I'll last the full three minutes but with only 30 seconds remaining, I stick it out.

As I leave the chamber and robe up, there's the most incredible rush around my body. I feel euphoric, my skin is tingling, my legs feel powerful and I'm insanely energised. Perhaps we call it the Cryo High.

"The blood comes rushing back from the core of your body to your limbs when you step out of the chamber," explains Peter. "It's exhilarating and the feeling lasts for days." Indeed it does... I was still feeling it when I popped into cryo.com.au in Edgecliff, Sydney, for a follow-up session a few weeks later. Ange Bowe, the Operations Manager says, "Clients have reported improved sleep, more supple joints and a decrease in general muscle soreness."

This treatment is far more bearable, maybe because I know what to expect. Again, I find the results lasted around one month, with my energy levels soaring, my back less painful and my skin glowing. Since then, I've had two more treatments in close succession and, seeing the long-term benefits, it's safe to say I am hooked. Ange recommends Cryo for everyone, at least once a week. "For general wellbeing, we suggest once or twice a week,

but for weight management, anti-ageing, sports recovery or injury management, we suggest three times a week."

Priced from between \$75 and \$100 a session, realistically this might not be in everyone's budget, but even a drop-in session now and then has huge benefits and if my anecdotal evidence is anything to go by, it can be useful in kicking that nasty hangover to the kerb. ■

