

Sauna treatment found to lower blood pressure, improve vascular health

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Sauna heat therapy reduces blood pressure in middle-aged people, according to researchers at Brigham Young University in Utah. The study also revealed that its specific sauna method lowered body core

temperature more than methods used in prior heat studies. Researchers presented their work at the [American Physiology Summit](#), held in Long Beach, California, April 20–23.

Sauna exposure is a type of passive heat therapy. It has grown in popularity as a way to improve overall cardiovascular health. High [blood pressure](#) can lead to serious health challenges, such as [heart disease](#) and stroke, eye problems and kidney disease. It could also damage your arteries, restricting blood flow and oxygen to the heart.

The current study was based on earlier work from Finland showing a trend that people who used the sauna frequently for at least 19 minutes or more were less likely to develop cardiovascular disease than those who did not. New research showed that the physiological response to a single sauna session was identical among young and middle-aged adults. To achieve these results, researchers studied 10 men and women ages 18–30 and eight men and women ages 50–64. Participants underwent 40 minutes of sauna exposure divided into 20-minute sessions at 176 degrees Fahrenheit. No adverse effects were observed among participants.

"This suggests we may not need to go to extremes to see improvements in cardiovascular health when using heat therapy over a longer period of time," said Olivia Leach, a master's student at Brigham Young University and first author of the study.

Provided by American Physiological Society

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