

# Cold Plunge Protocol

The science-backed routine that actually works

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Cold water immersion triggers a norepinephrine spike (up to 300%), improves mood, reduces inflammation, and accelerates recovery. This guide gives you the protocol used by serious athletes and biohackers — without the pretension.

## The minimum effective dose

- Temperature: 50-59F (10-15C) is the range with the strongest evidence. Colder is not better.
- Time: 2-3 minutes per session. You get most of the benefit in the first 2 minutes.
- Frequency: 3-4 sessions per week. Daily plunging shows diminishing returns.

## Entry and mental protocol

- Control the breath first: box breathing (4 in, 4 hold, 4 out) before you step in.
- Enter fully — up to the neck. Chest and neck submersion matters for the vagal nerve response.
- Do NOT immediately exit when uncomfortable. The first 30 seconds are the hardest; after that the body adapts.
- End with cold, not warm — the rewarming your body does naturally produces the hormonal benefit.

## Timing your plunge

- Morning: best for energy and dopamine. Stacks well with exercise.
- Post-workout: controversial — may blunt muscle growth if done immediately after strength training. Wait 4+ hours.
- Evening: avoid within 2 hours of sleep — the norepinephrine spike can delay sleep onset.

## Insider glossary

**Norepinephrine** — A stress hormone and neurotransmitter that spikes 300%+ in cold water — responsible for the mood lift.

**Vagal tone** — Vagus nerve activation from chest/neck submersion — improves heart rate variability and stress response.

**Brown adipose tissue** — Fat that generates heat by burning calories; activated by cold exposure over time.

**The shiver** — Your body's heating mechanism post-plunge — let it happen. Do not suppress it with a hot shower.

## Starter checklist

- A tub or plunge vessel
- Thermometer (you need to know the temp)
- A way to cool the water (ice or chiller)
- Timer
- Dry robe or warm clothes for after

**Suffer On Purpose — cold plunge tee at [15d0.com/shop/coldplunge/](https://15d0.com/shop/coldplunge/)**