

## CONTRAST BATH

The principle of contrast bath therapy is to combine the effects of both hot as well as cold bath together. The part is immersed alternatively in hot and in cold water tanks.

The temperature of hot water ranges from 36–45°C and the cold water from 15–20°C. The part is immersed first in the hot water and then in the cold water, and the treatment is repeated thereafter. As a general rule, the treatment should begin with the hot water and should end with the cold water.

The total treatment time may vary between 15–30 minutes, with immersion in the warm around 3 minutes and in cold around 1 minute. The whole cycle is repeated for about 4–5 times.

**Physiological Effects:** The alteration in warm and cold leads to vasodilatation and vasoconstriction at regular intervals. It leads to reduction in edema and is beneficial in various chronic peripheral circulatory disturbances.

The regular change in temperature also leads to considerable change in the sensory stimulus. This stimulus is relatively vigorous because each time neural stimulation starts to occur the temperature stimulus is reversed. This strong sensory stimulus acts to suppress pain by means of gate mechanism and accounts for suppression of pain in many patients receiving this treatment.

To maintain proper hygiene, contrast baths are also need to be cleaned frequently. Some disinfectant or antimicrobial agent should be used for cleaning both the tanks. Contraindications are open wounds, recent hemorrhage, skin allergy, eczema or infection.