

Instructional e-book on how to:

Make your own Hot  
Packs

Make your own Cold  
Packs

Make your own  
Paraffin Bath

Summer Physical Therapy & Sports Care

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## Introduction

Making your own hot packs and paraffin bath can be done with very little to no money. In fact, most people already own these necessary items or have them already lying around the house. You can also “borrow” such items from friends, neighbors, or relatives.

The point is, these are a simple yet effective modalities used in many hospitals, physician offices, chiropractic offices, and physical therapy facilities around the country. Why do so many practitioners use it? The answer is simply: because it works! Unfortunately, to purchase the commercial grade equipment they use for application of these modalities can cost over a thousand dollars. This e-book will show you how to do it with only a fraction of the cost.

The use of heat should be applied with caution due to potential burns. Hot packs and paraffin baths are meant to be used as superficial heat only. It is meant to be used locally, that is, on one body part at a time; e.g., lower back, shoulder, or hand. With the paraffin bath, you are not limited only to the hand or foot.....but you can also brush the wax onto a body part such as a shoulder using a small paint brush (but a hot pack would be more convenient for an area of the body like this).

## Indications/Contraindications for Superficial Thermotherapy

Hot packs and paraffin baths are both considered to be superficial thermotherapy. Below is a list of general indications on why you may want to use a hot pack or paraffin bath:

1. Joint stiffness
2. Muscular discomfort due to tightness.
3. Muscle spasms.
4. Subacute and chronic traumatic and inflammatory conditions.
5. Painful joints due to arthritis (paraffin bath mostly).

Now for the list of reasons why you would not want to or should not use a hot pack or paraffin bath. If you are unsure, consult your physician for proper guidance. **Do not risk injury and/or a burn to yourself.** They are as follows:

1. Acute and subacute traumatic and inflammatory conditions. In other words, a condition that occurred within the last 36 hours.
2. Decreased circulation.
3. Decreased sensation.
4. If you have deep vein thrombophlebitis.
5. Impaired cognitive function.
6. Malignant tumors.
7. Tendency towards hemorrhage or swelling.

8. You are too young.
9. You are too old.
10. Allergic rash.
11. Open cuts.
12. Recent scars or sutures.
13. Skin infections.
14. If you are a hemophiliac.
15. You have a skin graft.

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## Making a Paraffin Bath

### What you will need:

- 4 pounds of paraffin
- 1 pint of mineral oil
- 1 Crock pot or Double boiler
- 1 Candy thermometer
- 1 Plastic bag
- 1 Towel

### How you will do it:

1. Put paraffin and mineral oil in crock pot or double boiler. Approximately 1/3 cup of oil to every pound of paraffin is recommended. The ratio is about 7 parts paraffin to 1 part oil.
2. Heat up to between 113-126 degrees Fahrenheit.
3. Dip hand into paraffin and remove until paraffin stops dripping.
4. Re-immerses and continue dipping for about 8-10 times. A thick "glove" will be formed.
5. Wrap the hand in the plastic bag.
6. Cover and wrap the hand with towel.
7. Keep wax on for 20 minutes or until it cools.
8. Remove towel and plastic bag and peel off wax and return to the crock pot.

For elbows or knees, a paintbrush may be used to paint on the wax.

Precautions: Check with your physician if you are in doubt about using this modality.

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## Making a Hot Pack

### What you will need:

A pillow case

Uncooked Rice

Fragrance from herb or spice you enjoy.

First, take a pillow case and cut two pieces into the shape you desire. This may be based on the size of the area you want to target (larger shape for a lower back or smaller for a hand or shoulder). Flowered or patterned pillow cases may make it more interesting. Sew the edges closed except for a small area of about 2-3 inches. Turn the shape inside out.

Next fill the shape of the hot pack with uncooked rice. To make it even more pleasant you can even put some fragrant herbs or spices in with the rice. Make sure they are fragrances you enjoy. Then finish sewing the opening closed.

Place the hot pack in a microwave for 3-5 minutes. When it comes out it will be nice and warm and if you have put fragrance in it, then it will smell good too. The heat effect will last about 10-15 minutes. It can be heated over and over again. The time may vary depending on the power of your microwave. Some practice and trial runs will let you know the proper time.

### IMPORTANT:

1. Test the hot pack against your forearm first to make sure it is not too hot



before placing it on your body.

2. Do not let the hot pack get wet. If it does, open it up and replace it with new rice.

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## Cryotherapy

Cold packs are sometimes referred to as cryotherapy. Some people find the use of cold packs much more beneficial than hot packs, all though it may not be as comfortable once applied. You may need to try both yourselves to determine which works better for you? Hot or cold packs?

### Use of Ice

The following are Indications on why you would want to use a cold pack:

1. Acute and chronic traumatic and inflammatory conditions.
2. Swelling or edema.
3. Muscle spasms.
4. Muscle discomfort (like that related to stress or strain).

The following is a list contraindications or reasons why you should not use a cold pack. If you are unsure on whether or not to use a cold pack, or if anything on this list pertains to you, consult your physician for proper guidance. They are:

1. Impaired circulation.
2. Impaired sensation.
3. Peripheral vascular disease.

4. Raynaud's Disease.
5. Sensitivity or allergic reaction to cold.

During the application of an ice pack, it is usual to experience the following physiological responses or "stages": cold, burning, aching and numbness. You can remember this easily by thinking CBAN.

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## Making a Cold Pack

### What you will need:

Water

Ziploc bags

Rubbing alcohol (or any alcohol will do).

### Instructions:

1. Pour 3 cups of water in a zip lock bag.
2. Add 1 cup of isopropyl alcohol.
3. Mix contents.
4. Close bag and place in another bag and close the second bag.
5. Place in freezer.

Contents should turn into a slushy mixture after 24 hours. If it is too solid, add more alcohol. If it is too watery, add water.

Another alternative is to use a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp cloth.

1. Always use a washcloth or towel between the ice pack and skin.
2. Apply only for 10 minutes at a time.
3. Cold pack may be reapplied as often as needed so long as you wait one hour between applications.

## Disclaimer

This e-book is not intended to provide in any way medical or therapeutic advice. Information herein does not represent medical advice. If you are seeking medical advice contact a licensed health practitioner. The information contained in this e-book is not intended to induce or persuade anyone to use hot packs, cold packs or paraffin baths. All information herein is for informational purposes only and represents an expression of the opinion of the authors.

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