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Why Sauna Therapy For Autism Might Be A Game Changer

APRIL 1, 2022 JOHANNES 7 MIN READ



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“Light Therapy” is a very broad and all-encompassing concept. Essentially, all type of different therapies can be subsumed under the term, including exposing yourself to sunlight, lamps against Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), [infrared saunas](#), red light therapy, and *much more*.

Don’t worry if those terms sound complicated - I’ll break it down later on in this blog...

Additionally, “autism” is a very complex phenomenon that’s not completely

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understood by science right now. As this blog post considers the topic of how light therapy can affect autism, I'll first give you a brief introduction to both terms. In the later part of this blog post, I'll tell you how to use light therapy - specifically infrared saunas - for autism.

So let's start with the basics. First, let's consider what



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Autism Basics

I'll exclusively cover the basics of autism here - the nature of the condition is quite complicated as whole libraries of books and scientific papers have been written about it. Suffice it to say that autism is a developmental disorder that mainly targets the neurological system (1; 2; 3; 4).

Children and adults with autism generally have inferior communication and socialisation skills. Living independently, therefore, becomes harder, although the likelihood can be increased through interventions.

Autism usually shows itself during the early life years of children, around the age of three. Risk factors include toxin exposure during pregnancy, which can include heavy metals such as lead or drug use. Other factors include the fetus being restricted in its growth during pregnancy, infections, autoimmune disease in the mother, and more.

There's currently no cure for autism. Hence, managing symptoms and improving quality of life becomes very important. And in relation to those goals, light therapy comes in:

What Is Light Therapy?

You probably know there are different colours of light. These are violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, and any combination in between. In physics, that light is part of what is called the "light spectrum" (5; 6; 7).

Moreover, below red you can find "infrared light", and above violet, there's "ultraviolet" light. And although both infrared and ultraviolet light is invisible to the human eye, they do have an effect on your body.

Infrared light is what makes sunlight feel warm when it hits your skin, and ultraviolet light is what can give you a sunburn.

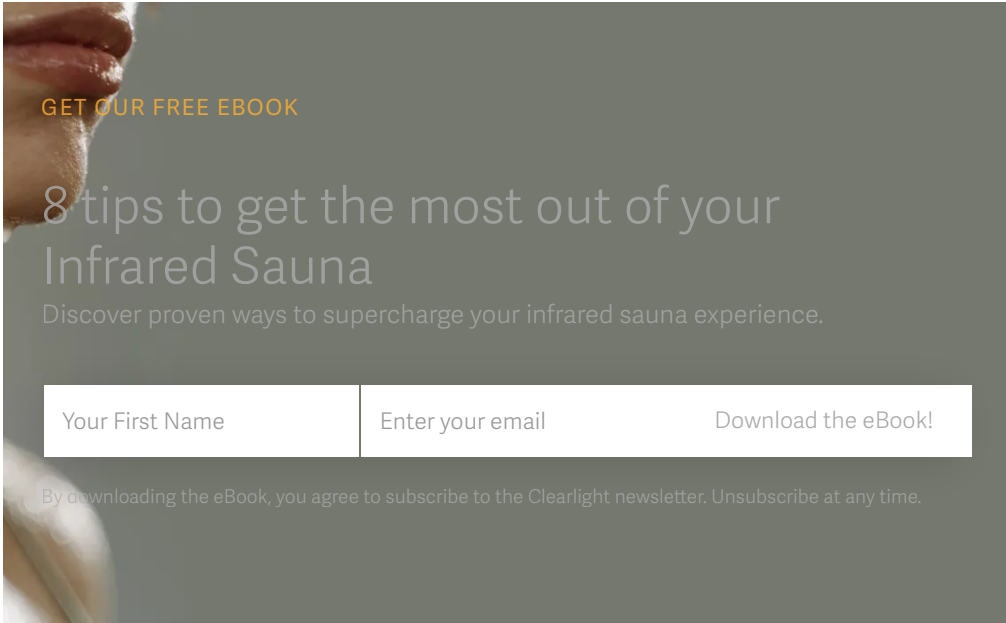
Contrary to popular belief though, visible light affects your body's biology too - I'll venture into that topic in more detail in a second. The statement "light affects your body's biology" here means that light can influence both superficial and deeper tissues ([8](#); [9](#); [10](#); [11](#)).

Light actually penetrates into your body. Different parts of the light spectrum can enter your body to different degrees. Some parts of ultraviolet light don't venture deep into your body and are necessary to create vitamin D in your skin. Red and some parts of the infrared light spectrum, on the other hand, might penetrate your body up to several inches of depth, thereby acting as nutrients for many processes of your cells.

Next up, "light therapy", as a broad term, uses that light spectrum to affect different biological processes of your body. Here are some examples of light therapy:

- Using a SAD lamp, which in most cases emits blue light or full-spectrum visible (white light, to counteract SAD
- Tanning beds expose your skin to different types of ultraviolet light, which not only tan your skin but also releases so-called natural "opioids" that make you feel great
- [Red light therapy](#) supplies your body with very specific healing frequencies of both red and near-infrared light. These types of light can enhance your well-being, energy levels, sleep quality, recovery, athletic performance, cognitive abilities, and much more
- Infrared saunas either use far infrared light only or all parts of the infrared light spectrum, if they're ["full-spectrum" infrared saunas](#).

These are the main types of light therapy, although other options exist. In the rest of this blog post, I'll consider the options that are most relevant for autism, starting with the infrared sauna for autism:



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Infrared Sauna For Autism

As stated in the previous section, infrared saunas heat your body by exposing you to infrared light. That light enters your cells and heats you from the inside out. That mechanism is slightly different from traditional saunas, but in this blog post, I'll only focus on infrared saunas.

So let's consider why an infrared sauna for autism can be beneficial:

Detoxification

Nowadays, the link between autism and toxicity exposure, either during pregnancy or afterwards, is increasingly considered plausible by the scientific community ([12](#), [13](#), [14](#)). There's reason to believe that autistic children have higher concentrations of cadmium, mercury, and lead in their bodies, for instance.

Fortunately, infrared saunas massively help your body's detoxification processes, including removing heavy metals through the skin as well. I've written about the body's ability to detoxify through the skin extensively in [my blog post about my infrared sauna detox protocol](#).

Keep in mind that by stating that infrared saunas can help detoxify these heavy metals I'm not implying that getting inside an infrared sauna will *cure* autism. Instead, I'm merely claiming that infrared sauna sessions probably affect an underlying cause of common autism symptoms, thereby improving overall well-being.

And even though saunas help you detox, it's not settled yet. I'd also like to see more extensive research on other toxins such as those found in cosmetics or

occupational exposure in relation to autism (15). Suffice it to say that infrared saunas enhance your overall ability to detoxify, either through sweating or enhancing detoxification through your digestive system. Both sweating and your digestive system are two main methods for removing toxins. Both types of detoxification can be stimulated by spending time in an infrared sauna.

And there's more:

Improved Well-Being And Destressing

One common symptom people with autism have is an increased risk of having anxiety, specifically anxiety disorders (16; 17; 18). Anxiety, in turn, is intertwined with having higher stress levels. Stress feeds anxiety, and having great anxiety levels feeds stress.

Fortunately, different parts of the red and infrared light spectrum have been proven to lower anxiety (19; 20; 21; 22). The same is true for countering (clinical) depression.

By lowering stress and anxiety, and countering depression, infrared saunas can be a huge benefit if you've got autism. Additionally, red light therapy offers the same benefits - and Clearlight offers the only red light therapy panel that now can be used inside a sauna. Let's consider that option in more detail:

Adding Red Light Therapy For Autism?

Several studies have investigated the effects of "red light therapy" on autism in the last few years. Remember that red light therapy uses parts of the *red* and *near-infrared* light spectrum - parts that are non-heating. Here are some of the study outcomes:

- By applying red light therapy to the brain, children and adolescents with autism lower their irritability, lethargy, social withdrawal, and other autism symptoms in a mere five sessions (23)
- Another study shows improvements in speech ability and the capability for social interaction when red light therapy is applied (24).
- It's very likely that autism is connected to both issues with excess inflammation as well as problems with so-called "mitochondria" (25; 26; 27). Mitochondria are the energy-producing factories of your cells. Red light therapy can, fortunately, lower excess inflammation and improve mitochondrial dysfunction so that your energy production capacity goes up.

And, although more research is needed to confirm these results, the outcomes are very promising. Also, research on the effects of red light therapy on autism is quite limited, so future research might find other effects of red light therapy for autism that are currently undiscovered.

Remember that our Clearlight® Light Therapy Tower is the only red light therapy

product that can be used inside a sauna. With that option, you can enjoy the benefits of both therapies at the same time, without having to spend extra time. Normally you can only use one therapy individually, meaning that you'll spend double the time to get the same benefits compared to if you're using our Clearlight products.

Having said that, there's one last topic to cover though - should people with autism change their treatment protocol compared to if you don't have autism? Let's find out:

Infrared Sauna For Autism Protocol

The way you use an [infrared sauna](#) or red light therapy shouldn't be *categorically* different whether you've got autism or not. However, as I and other bloggers on this website always reiterate, if you've got a chronic health condition, it's paramount to *build up* your infrared sauna sessions gradually and to monitor how you're doing both during and after a session.

Why?

Well, both infrared saunas and red light therapy are a form of temporary stress on the human body, in the same way that exercise is. With a chronic health condition you almost always have a lower capacity to be stressed, and hence, building sessions up gradually and monitoring the outcome becomes more important.

Hence, expose yourself to the heat of an infrared sauna and the light from [red light therapy](#), but go slowly at first. And with that being said, let's conclude:

Conclusion: An Infrared Sauna For Autism Is Probably Beneficial But More Research Is Needed

As you can see, light therapy for autism has many potential benefits. In this blog post I've specifically zoomed in on both [infrared saunas](#) and red light therapy - both options are very promising for dealing with autism symptoms and improving quality of life.

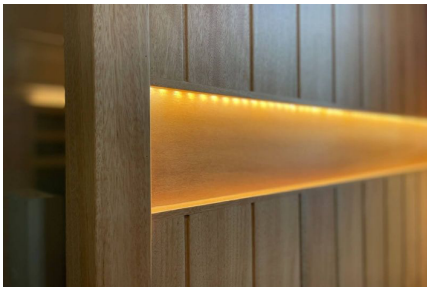
Hopefully, future research ventures deeper into the relationship between light therapy for autism, such as using sauna therapy for autism specifically. Time will tell, although you're advised to slowly start building up a sauna routine already because of the currently promising research...

Resources From Video:

[The severity of autism is associated with toxic metal body burden and red blood cell glutathione levels](#)

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References

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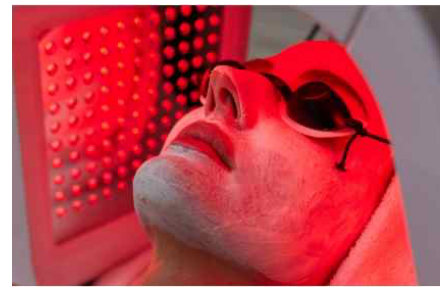


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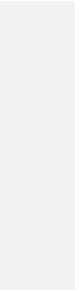
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