

ASK THE EXPERT

A LOCAL PRO ANSWERS OUR QUESTIONS.



Ray of Light

BY BRITTANY MILLER

We all know the power of a good sweat, but lately we've noticed the health-obsessed turning the heat up by incorporating infrared sauna treatments into their fitness formulas. So what exactly is an infrared sauna? We talked to **Cara-Michele Nether, owner of Strength & Vitality Wellness Center** in Mt. Washington, to get the lowdown on this popular light-based therapy.

What is an infrared sauna? Infrared saunas are a type of sauna that use light to create rays that we naturally experience from the sun. There are three different types of rays that the sun emits, called far, near, and mid rays. Each type has its own particular healing properties. Far rays heat the body directly and produce a deep sweat, which can help with weight loss, detoxifying, and blood pressure reduction. Near rays have a shorter range and benefit the epidermis layer of the skin, which helps with skin rejuvenation, wound healing, and pain relief. Mid rays penetrate the body on a deeper level and help with circulation and stimulating blood flow. Infrared saunas can emit one or all three rays at the same time.

How can infrared sauna treatments help the body? A lot of people come to an infrared sauna because they are experiencing inflammatory pain in their joints, have a chronic condition, or they're just looking to relax. Because this is a dry sauna, it also helps heal people with respiratory

concerns—such as asthma, bronchitis, and other things like that—and makes it easier for them to breathe because the infrared rays are working on the tissue that is damaged in the body.

How many treatments until you began to notice results? Most people are going to feel like they're able to detox during the first session, because they'll work up a sweat. Usually it's not until the second or third session that their body will start to release toxins through the skin by sweating. If the treatment is being used more for a medical issue, clients are usually coming in twice a week, and after four or five treatments, they start to notice a difference.

What can a client expect during an infrared sauna treatment? The cabin is not that big, so it gives a nesting feel, and we have a backrest and footrest in there so it is easy to get comfortable. It gets up to 154 degrees in the sauna. Clients typically aren't overwhelmed by the heat, because it is a dry sauna and not a steam sauna, which allows clients to be able to relax in the heat. People will leave feeling energized, relaxed, and ready to go.

WHAT YOU NEED:

READ UP:

Do some research before attending your first session so you understand which type of rays will benefit you the most.



HEALTH GOALS:

Be ready to discuss your goals and objectives with your attendant so you can accurately personalize your treatments.



PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE:

While you are bound to notice some results early on, it may take a couple sessions to feel them completely.



>> Do you have a question you want answered? Email us at blauren@baltimore-magazine.com. We will select various questions to feature in upcoming issues.