**WARMING SOCKS aka “Magic Socks”**

“Warming Socks” is a therapy involving socks that are warm. However, the name can be a bit confusing because the socks are applied cold – hence, the treatment involves utilizing the warming process supplied by your own body. The warming socks treatment works best when it is repeated for three nights in a row at the first sign(s) of illness. Warming socks are useful in cases of colds, flu, sore throat, ear infection, headache, migraine, nasal congestion, coughs, sinus infection or in any inflammation/ infection of the throat. Children have called these socks, “Magic Socks”.

This therapy acts reflexively to increase circulation**\***, thereby decreasing congestion in the upper respiratory passages, head, and throat. It has a sedating action and many patients report that they sleep much better during the therapy. This treatment increases the body’s healing response during acute infections and is also effective for pain relief.

Supplies –

* A warm footbath or bath
* A towel
* 1 pair of thin cotton socks (100% best but at least 60% cotton will do in a pinch)
* 1 pair of thick wool socks large enough to completely cover the cotton socks (100% best, but again, 60% will do)

Directions –

1. Warm your feet. The treatment may not be as effective if your feet are not first warmed. Foot warming can be accomplished by either a warm-water foot soak or a full-body warm water soak. Either method should last a minimum of 5 minutes, enough to accomplish thorough warming.
2. Dry your feet and/or body with a dry towel.
3. Now take a pair of cotton socks and immerse them in cold water. Make sure they are thoroughly soaked. If you tend to be cold-natured or have low vitality, try using cool water during the first treatment rather than cold water.
4. Wring the cotton socks out thoroughly so that they do not drip. Place the socks on your feet.
5. Pull the thick wool socks completely over the cotton socks. Don’t walk around at this point.
6. Get immediately into bed. Cover up well and sleep all night with the “warming” socks on. They should become relaxing and not uncomfortably cold. In the morning, both the cotton socks and your feet should be warm and dry. If you are unable to sleep because your feet feel too cold, then consider removing the socks and soaking your feet again (in warmer water or for longer) and using cool rather than cold water this time in wetting the cotton socks.
7. *This therapy is most effective if done on 3 consecutive nights.* It can also be done during the daytime (do not walk around in the socks), replacing the compress after the socks have dried (air the feet before replacing).

**(WARMING) HEATING COMPRESS**

🡪As an alternative, or as a complement, to the Warming Socks, try throat or chest warming compresses. The same principles for the Warming Socks therapy apply here.

1) Warm the throat or chest with a hot washcloth or by showering.

2) Dry the skin thoroughly.

3) Apply a thin cotton wrap (to the front of the throat only) or don a thin cotton short-sleeved or sleeveless T-shirt (for the torso – i.e. covering both the chest and back) that has been soaked in cold water and wrung out thoroughly. Completely cover the cotton with a wool scarf (throat) or a wool sweater (chest).

4) Go to bed and cover up. By morning, the cotton wrap or T-shirt should be warm and dry.

🡪Warming compresses can also be employed to reduce joint inflammation/pain. Using the same principles, warm the area then apply a cold cotton compress and completely cover with a wool covering. Leave the compress on for several hours or overnight. You may have to employ some ingenuity here in securing the compress; safety pins, Velcro, etc. have been used. I have cut the sleeves from old long-sleeved cotton t-shirts & old wool sweaters and pulled them over joints.

* If you want to create a stronger treatment scenario (joints only), then cover the cold wet cotton with an impervious barrier such as saran wrap before applying the wool covering. The impervious barrier will inhibit evaporation and increase the heat build-up in the area, thereby intensifying the reflexive action. Experiment first with the basic treatment before trying this intensifying one. The basic treatment may be sufficient.

**\*How it Works –** i.e. Mechanism –

The cold causes an initial vasoconstriction which is soon followed by vasodilation which leads to a warming of the tissue; as heat builds up within the compress, further dilation results. [If an impervious covering has been applied (do this only over joints; do NOT do this with the socks, neck, or chest compresses), heat will build up even higher, causing a relaxation of the tissue and a strong derivative (secondary) effect.] Cooling gradually takes place due to evaporation, bringing back the initial phase, the cold treatment – the treatment then cycles back through the phases already described. This is a beneficial cycle. This vacillation between the cool and warm temperatures is what gives a strong tonic effect to the tissues, increasing circulation and decreasing congestion.

PRECAUTIONS –

* Use these treatments with extreme caution on anyone possessing decreased or compromised sensory perception; this includes infants, the elderly, those with peripheral vascular disease or conditions which are aggravated by extreme cold, and diabetics; i.e. test the warm water to be used on the inside of the elbow for comfort, and use only cold tap water for the cold application & never ice water.
* Do NOT use this treatment directly over areas of hemorrhage, gastric ulcers, or malignancy.

**Reference:** Wade Boyle, N.D. and Andre Saine, N.D. *Lectures in Naturopathic Hydrotherapy*. Eclectic Medical Publications. Sandy, Oregon 97055. Copyright 1988, Fourth printing 1995.