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Sergei's Butternut Squash Cookies

- 4 cups peeled butternut squash, chopped into medium sized chunks
- 1 cup raisins
- juice of one orange
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons raw agave nectar

Blend the chopped squash in a food processor and transfer into a bowl. Next blend the raisins and the orange juice in a food processor and add to the squash mixture. Add the rest of the ingredients into the bowl and mix thoroughly.

Use ice cream scoop and scoop the mixture onto a dehydrator tray. Flatten each cookie until they are one inch thick. Set the dehydrator for 105 degrees and leave in for 12–15 hours.

Makes 7-11 cookies.

Sneak Preview of Sergei's video demo:

To watch Click here:

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Tempering the Body with Cold Water

By Victoria Boutenko

Throughout history, humans bathed exclusively in cold water except on those rare occasions when they had access to hot springs. Today, there are still many countries where people have only cold water for their personal use.

Ancient Greeks were aware of the healing properties of cold water. When they invented the first water-heating systems in 700 BC, they continued using cold-water treatments for health purposes. Spartans, for whom health was a matter of high reputation, considered it to be unmanly to use hot water; they regularly dipped in cold water for vigor and better health.¹

In the 1st Century, in Finland it became common for people to jump into cold streams or lakes after sweating in saunas. The indigenous peoples of ancient Russia used cold plunges into icy water for the ceremony of “purification” in the 9th Century. Tempering the body with cold water has been a widespread Russian tradition throughout the centuries and into the present.

Swimming in ice water is a part of Russian culture and tradition to such an extent that there is even a large government-funded organization called, The Federation of Tempering and Winter Swimming. In addition, Moscow hosts an annual science conference dedicated to researching the influence of cold water on the human organism. There are several research institutes in Russia, especially in Siberia, which have been studying the effects of cold temperatures on human health for many

¹ <http://www.victorianturkishbath.org/2HISTORY/3CLOSER.htm>

decades. I would like to share some of their latest findings.

The maximum healing occurs when the body is submerged in water with a temperature *below* 12°Celsius (53°F) for one to two minutes.² During the brief application of cold water, the blood vessels in the skin abruptly contract, pushing a large amount of blood inside the organism. This results in the re-activating of the inner capillaries, many of which are typically atrophied by the age of 30, due to poor circulation and an unhealthy lifestyle. The regeneration of a large amount of capillaries ensures that our inner organs receive the necessary nutrients for their optimal performance and rejuvenation. This great improvement in capillary circulation results in the younger appearance of cold-water swimmers.³ In ancient Greek this

² Kondakova-Varlamova, *Methods of Tempering Procedures*, 1980, (in Russian)

³ Malakhov, G. *Tempering and Healing with Water*. Stalker Publishing, Russia, 2006 (in Russian)

⁴ Maistrakh, E. *Physiological Pathology of Cooling of Human Organism*. Medicine Publishing, Russia, 1975. (in Russian)

⁵ Kolgushkin, A. *Tempering*. Ripol Classic Publishing, Russia, 1997 (in Russian)

⁶ Chizhevsky, A. *The Terrestrial Echo of Solar Storms*. Moscow, Mysl Publishing, 1976

⁷ Baranov, A, Kidalov, V. *Healing with Cold*. Astrel Publishing, Russia, 2000 (in Russian)

⁸ Aleksandrov, M. *Human Safety on the Sea*. Sudostroenie Publishing, Russia, 1983 (in Russian)

⁹ Grebyonkin, V. Report of the President of The Federation of Tempering and Winter Swimming. Posted at: <http://umcsa.narod.ru/rus/index.htm> and http://www.russianrecords.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18

¹⁰ Vancouver Polar Bear Swim Club, <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/parks/events/polarbear>

¹² Zhbakov R. *The Tasks and Perspectives of Cold Tempering and Winter Swimming*. 2nd Scientific and Methodological Conference on Cold Tempering and Winter Swimming, Minsk, 1967 (in Russian)

process was called, "the natural gymnastics of blood vessels."

Several scientific studies have demonstrated that within 50 seconds after the brief application of extremely cold temperatures, an enormous amount of heat is generated by the transformation of neurons, which is known as the phenomenon of "instant free heat." Therefore, despite the initial shock that can be painful, winter swimmers, often called "Polar Bears" almost immediately experience an amazingly pleasant warmth from head to toe, causing the profound relaxation of the entire body.⁴ This relaxation is one of a kind, as it cannot be compared to any other way of relaxing.

Russian scientists have demonstrated that the combination of quick cold stress and the resulting heat stimulates the body to find diseased cells and destroy them, thus reversing many degenerative diseases of liver, kidneys, and heart, as well as mental problems.⁵

After a cold plunge the surface of the skin becomes charged with negative ions. Russian academician and scientist, Alexander Chizhevsky considered this charge of negative ions to be important for our bodies, which are often charged too positively.⁶

Tempering the body with cold water increases the rate of the metabolism. This brings about the purging of free radicals, heavy metals, nitrates, and pesticides. Additionally this cleansing occurs via skin and lungs, and unloads the burden on the kidneys.⁷

Finally, swimming in cold water dramatically strengthens immunity. While

constantly protecting ourselves from natural cold and heat by using air conditioners, heaters, and clothing, we constantly keep our bodies at the same temperature, disabling our natural systems of thermal regulation. We tend to think that this brings our body to a healthy and comfortable state when in actuality, the opposite is true. When exposed to cold temperatures, a human organism that has not been trained to regulate its internal temperature, loses its internal heat approximately 30 times faster than a tempered body.⁸ As a result, one can get sick from even minor changes in outside temperatures, for example after waiting five extra minutes in windy weather or after getting wet under the rain.

At the same time, we have not even remotely explored the depth of human abilities. My mind was totally blown away when I read a report of the new sport named "Aquaice": swimming in ice cold water, which became popular in recent years in Russia, Japan, Czech Republic, China, and other countries. Hundreds of competitors take part in marathon swims in ice-cold *water* usually lasting for many hours. For example, as soon as the thick ice cracked on the Moscow River, on March 19th of 2006, 20 teams from different regions of Russia competed in a 100 km (62.1 miles) swim. The teams consisted of four swimmers (men and women) that would take turns in covering this distance. The record time was 42 hours 45 minutes! The longest stretch was 7,000 meters (4.3 miles) In order to reach this level of tempering in the body it takes several years of constant practice.⁹

Cold-water swimming is becoming continuously more popular in many continents, including North America. There is a number of old Polar Bear Clubs in the

state of New York that engage hundreds of people in this healthy practice.

Perhaps the biggest Polar Bear Club on this continent is located in Vancouver, BC, where thousands of people are involved. For instance, on New Year's Day in the year 2000, there were 2,128 "polar bears" simultaneously swimming in the ice-cold ocean to celebrate.¹⁰

In the 80s, my husband Igor was president of the Regional Polar Bear Club in Moscow. He took our family every morning before work, to swim in frozen rivers and lakes, including the times I was pregnant and breastfeeding. I remember how we got so used to our cold baths that we couldn't miss even one day. If we skipped dipping in the ice water for one day there was a definite feeling of loss, and the children didn't sleep well and behaved cranky. I personally felt that the whole day went wrong.

Winter swimming is a wonderful method of tempering the body, which increases the energetic strength of the organism. Statistics holds that among those who practice winter swimming sickness rates decrease for cold-type diseases *60 times*.¹¹ As a therapeutic method, winter swimming can heal many illnesses, including arthritis, hypertension, tuberculosis, type 2 diabetes, chronic gastrointestinal diseases, different inflammations, menstrual cycle abnormalities, dermatitis, and many others. Of course, everyone should receive proper instructions before jumping in the cold river at the local Polar Bear Club or from the literature.

Some researchers question the benefits of human exposure to very cold and hot temperatures as too extreme. I believe these practices are as natural for people

as exercising or fasting. For example, feeling tired after jogging doesn't mean that we should abstain from running. Both the facts and research show that people who try to always stay in the same temperatures by using heaters, air conditioning, or warm clothes often end up having less energy, vitality, and longevity.¹² Most centenarians, or people 100 years old and above, live in the mountains where the contrast of temperature is unavoidable.

Contrary to the popular belief, winter swimming is remarkably enjoyable. After dipping in cold water I feel so good and refreshed that I cannot think of anything else being compatible with this pleasure. My family traditionally goes for a swim on each New Year's morning. Igor has introduced dozens of Americans to cold-water swimming. Many participants of our retreats in Ashland experienced jumping into the cold river and told us that they felt incredibly energized and pleased with the whole experience.

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Also, a small excerpt from this book is available in Hebrew at:

http://www.beofen-tv.co.il/cgi-bin/chiq.pl?%F8%F1%F7_%E9%F8%E5%F7

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