

### CONTRAST ARM / FOOT BATHS:

This modality is often given when someone has poor circulation to their hands or feet (cold hands/feet) or has muscular and/or fascial tightness in their forearms and hands (or legs and feet).

#### Benefits of Contrast Bathing:

- Promotes healthy circulation
- Removes waste products from muscles and tissue
- Encourages delivery of oxygen and nutrients into muscles and tissue
- Promotes healing process
- Improves function of muscles
- Decreases pain and irritation created by excess waste products

#### What you need:

- Clock with seconds hand
- Towel
- Double sink OR sink and bucket OR two buckets

**What to watch for:** When you start with this treatment you should use a warm to cool temperatures as this can be a strong treatment and clients have experienced **light headedness** when they have gone right to the hot to cold temperatures. Over a number of applications; work from the warm to cool up to the hot to cold temperature changes. **If at anytime during the treatment you should feel dizzy or abnormal change in skin sensation of the area, remove your hands and forearms from the water bath at once.**

If you have diabetes or poor circulation to your extremities &/or an abnormal skin sensation to temperature talk - with your RMT prior to doing this homecare. You may still be able to do contrast baths but will have to modify the temperatures to be safe.

## CONTRAST ARM / FOOT BATHS CONTINUED:

**How to do it:** Fill one sink or the sink with warm to hot water (depending on your heat tolerance) and fill the other sink or bowl with cool to cold water. The warm/hot water should be enough to submerge your forearms (bent to 90 degrees) mid way up your upper arm. If you have a sink fill the cool/cold water to the same level, but if you do not have a sink try and get enough water to submerge your hands above the wrist or midway up your forearm. If you want an even stronger treatment you can add ice to the water to make more of a contrast.

Put your arms in the warm/hot bath for 3 minutes and then move to the cool/cold water for 30 seconds. Repeat this cycle 3 times. Always ending in the cool/cold water. Don't worry your hands won't stay cold, but will warm up quickly after removal. Towel dry and you are done.

**When to do this:** The more you do this treatment the more flushing and circulatory training will occur in the tissues. You can do it prior to doing your homecare stretches to prepare the muscles for the stretch. If your job requires a lot of use of your forearm and hand muscles, you may want to do this at the end of the workday. Or if you are active in a sport that irritates your forearm/hand or legs/feet you can do it after you finish the sport.