
SOUND BATHS

What is a sound bath and what happens at one?

What are their benefits?

How should I prepare/what do I need to bring?



Sound baths use sound frequencies to affect the brain and the autonomic nervous system. This calms the “fight or flight” response resulting in relaxation, healing and individual enrichment. Why is the term sound bath used? Because a person is simply letting the sounds wash over them and bathe them. You don’t need to do anything, or have any previous experience or knowledge of any method. You just lay still, relax and receive. Plus, the sounds can be cleansing and renewing like a warm bath.

At a sound bath, a practitioner will set up various instruments which participants will experience while sitting or laying down while fully clothed. Popular instruments used are crystal singing bowls, Himalayan metal singing bowls, gongs, chimes, drums and various percussion instruments.

The sound bath often begins with a brief explanation of what to expect followed by a short guided meditation. The meditation may be based on a theme like gratitude, courage or abundance. Or, it might focus on the body and breathing as a way for participants to relax and be best prepared to experience the sounds during the rest of the session.

What benefits can a sound bath provide? Many scientific studies show evidence that music reduces stress and can improve one’s mental state. One reason sound baths and sound therapy are so effective is because our



bodies are 60% water and water is an excellent conductor of sound. Also, everything is in a state of vibration including our bodies. It is interesting to note that sound therapy and vibrational medicine are coming into the mainstream more and more. Sound is already used in hospitals to break up kidney stones and in ultrasound imaging.

The frequencies work through a method of entrainment. They can synchronize our brainwave state. The frequencies of the bowls, gongs and other instruments can change the brainwave state from our usual alert beta state of problem solving to the relaxed state of alpha and even to the more dreamlike brainwave state of theta with the possibility of going even deeper into the delta range which can be very healing.

The vibrations and frequencies of bowls, gongs and other instruments activate the parasympathetic nervous system of the body which results in decreased muscle tension, blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing rate. The tones increase the release of melatonin, endorphin and dopamine chemicals which help to focus the mind, fosters stronger concentration and balances moods while reducing fatigue. Sound baths can often benefit those experiencing PTSD, anger issues, anxiety, sleeplessness, and depression.

After a sound bath, many feel mental freshness. There is often calmness instead of a racing mind, a release from anxiety and deep relaxation. Often, many participants feel that time was much shorter than the actual length of the session.

However, there are a few contraindications regarding sound baths. It's not advisable to participate in the early stages of pregnancy or soon after an operation.

What might you want to bring to a sound bath? One of the best ways to experience a sound bath is lying down. You may want to bring a yoga or exercise mat, blanket, pillow, knee bolster (can be a rolled up towel), eye mask and water bottle. However if you are more comfortable sitting, that is an option.

How should you prepare for a sound bath? Come with curiosity and open mind. Thoughts are powerful and can affect the outcome of an experience. If you come with skepticism, it can color your experience. Sound therapy pioneer Jonathan Goldman says, "Frequency + intent = healing" (or whatever outcome is desired). How we think and direct our thoughts during a session is important. Goldman provides the equation "Sound + Belief = Outcome".

As a final thought, the person performing a sound bath is a "sound facilitator". The practitioner provides a vehicle through the sounds and through their intention. It is the person receiving the sounds/vibrations that is really doing their own work of restoration, healing and positive movement.



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