

THERMAHEAL TIMES

Founder: Rhonda Stetsko

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WHAT'S COOL, WHAT'S HOT?

The Thermaheal Story

I am often asked how the idea and designs for technically functional and aesthetically beautiful **THERMAHEAL** wraps came about.

During my first year in the University of Waterloo's Master's Degree program in Applied Health Sciences, I sustained a personal injury that left me with 37 stitches to my face, plus neck and shoulder trauma. It took 3 hours of ER treatment with an on-the-spot z-plasty and 3 years of rehab to finally recover. It was through the care of a very knowledgeable RMT that I credit a significant part of my recovery. So I am truly grateful to RMT's and the very valued healing work they do.

Almost a year after the neck-shoulder trauma problems had set-in, I began to realize the benefits and importance of using cold-hot therapy to maximize my healing. I also believe that had I been more aware of the importance of using cold therapy within the first 48 – 72 hours post-injury, I could have significantly reduced the hematoma and scar tissue formation that followed.

During my recovery, I was often confused, with conflicting messages about using hot and cold as therapy. "Do I use cold, hot or flip-flop, for how long, when, etc.?" I couldn't seem to get the clarity I needed.

Interestingly, I would also continually come across people who were injured in some way and equally uncertain of how to use cold-hot therapy, even when

recommended by their health care practitioners. And although there were an increasing number of thermal therapy products available in retail, **none of them offered therapeutic guidelines with their products.** Most were unattractive, velcroed, vinyl or sack-like objects; not something you could feel very good about using.



By combining my natural creativity, health sciences research, health promotion and education backgrounds, **THERMAHEAL** was founded on the belief that healing is a blend of art & science – beauty & functionality.

My passion is to develop pain-relief that also meets the emotional and cognitive needs of healing by creating education-based, Class I medical devices that are attractively styled and contoured-to-fit multiple body areas - helping you feel good about getting better.

My sincere desire is to help massage and physical therapies practitioners continue to provide improved healing experiences and outcomes for their clients using cold and heat as therapy.

Rhonda can be contacted at: (519) 880-8211

UPCOMING ARTICLES

1	Client Education and At-Home Care
2	Hand Self-Care – There's a wrap for that!
3	Comparison With Hydrocollator
4	Cold-Hot "Miracles" for Brachial Neuritis

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WHAT'S COOL, WHAT'S HOT?

Client Education and At-Home Care

One of the benefits of temperature therapy is that it can be readily used at home to enhance your client's comfort and healing process. By incorporating home treatment into their daily routines, clients see faster, better results. They gain an understanding of how to make self-treatment decisions in everyday life. And equally important, they come to trust their health partnership with you, their therapist.

People are inclined to choose heat because it is comforting. However, while cold will rarely aggravate a condition, heat certainly can intensify the inflammatory response, making pain and swelling worse. Education about the beneficial use of cold can be a valuable revelation for the lay person. Although, explaining the risks and benefits of temperature therapy use at home in an easily understandable way can seem lengthy and time consuming, it need not be. We are currently working on a **Client At-Home Care Instructions guide sheet to incorporate all these considerations.**

When recommending a home care regimen, we first make clear what is being treated and why cold or heat works better with some pain. The best compliance occurs when the client understands what the temperature treatment is designed to address and how it will help improve their healing. Once the client understands the appropriate uses of heat and cold, they may require accessible and affordable suggestions about how to perform their own treatments at home. Wherever possible, accommodate the heating and cooling agent(s) that the person will commit to using. To increase compliance, be sure treatment recommendations are realistic for the individual's lifestyle and schedule and include them in the process of determining a

suitable home treatment plan. As they see good results, people will often try more complex home care applications.

Since not all home care will be exact to that performed in-clinic, it is important to describe, or even demonstrate, the recommended treatment thoroughly and plainly. Include type of heat or cold source, specific temperature, duration and frequency of treatments, time of day and the use of any coupling agents. Follow up by including any post-treatment activities in your recommendation.

Laurel Fowlie, in her book on Heat and Cold as Therapy, relays an anecdote of what can happen with poorly understood instructions: "A client was instructed to do contrast bathing at home by a health professional who was treating his hand. What he did for contrast bathing was 30 MINUTES of hot followed by 10 MINUTES of cold, after which his hand was incredibly swollen!"

A good idea is to give brief, clearly written hand-outs describing home care treatments you recommend routinely. Advise the person how the skin should look and feel during and after treatment, what are signs of negative reactions, and what to do if one occurs. Finally review and evaluate the results of the home treatment plan with the person at each appointment, especially if they are just starting home temperature therapy. The dialogue helps emphasize the importance of the client's role and encourages compliance.

Ask for your copy of a **THERMAHEAL** Client Education Take-Home Guide on Temperature Therapy.

Call Rhonda at (519) 880 – 8211.

Source: L. Fowlie, Heat & Cold as Therapy, 2006

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FAQ'S ABOUT THE RMT SPECIAL WRAP

Affordable Alternative to the Hydrocollator

As you know, the Hydrocollator is a mainstay of many physical and massage therapy practices. But they can cost anywhere from \$300 - \$500.00. That's expensive for any starting practice. They require cleaning and maintenance, with sometimes yearly replacement of packs that dry out and crack. And they are hard to mould to the body. With the hot water at high temperatures, there is also a safety issue. Ever notice how the scale and calcification deposits build up and someone has to clean it out? Yuck! That requires the extra purchase of a cleaner.

Q: So how does the **THERMAHEAL™** RMT Special wrap compare with the Hydrocollator?

A: They also are reuseable, microwaveable and provide therapeutic moist heat and compression benefits, but at 85% less the cost, with no extra equipment or electrical cords. That makes it portable, as well. The **THERMAHEAL™** RMT Special wrap requires almost no maintenance or extra cleaning. Just store it dry inside the sealed bag that it comes in the freezer so that you always have a cold pack on hand. We are told the cold experience is exceptional, without being shocking - a big plus for clients.

Q: So all you really need is a freezer and microwave to get both hot and cold therapy?

A: Yes, and better than that - they easily conform to the body, don't crack or dry out, no costly maintenance is required, other than being washable - and that's a good thing. Their portability makes it great for any RMT doing out-of-clinic visits.

Q: So they are washable?

A: Yes, as long as the care guidelines are followed and the product is dried immediately after being in water for no longer than 20 minutes.

Here's what one RMT writes about her **THERMAHEAL™** wrap:

"This is one of the best investments for my practice. It offers the same benefits as a hydrocollator at a fraction of the cost. I love the versatility and it conforms to any area of the body. It's very portable. There is excellent quality and attention to the detail. I highly recommend it. My favourite THERMAHEAL product so far is the hand glove, which is a MUST for anyone using their hands. The cold gives so much relief at the end of my day".

T. Baker, RMT, Kitchener

Q: What's inside a **THERMAHEAL™** wrap? Isn't it just like a magic bag or bean bag?

A: No, because the hybrid Canadian wheat grain kernel inside was chosen based on 6 criteria. One of them was to avoid the fire safety hazard that Health Canada issued for buckwheat, grain and oat bags. These products use unhulled grain that abrades and degrades over time, creating a fine tinder that is flammable. **THERMAHEAL™** products avoid that by choosing an agricultural product that is triple cleaned,

sterilized and conditioned while meeting criteria for moisture content, water repellency, mould resistance, thermal retention and conduction, sphericity, hardness and durability to abrasion, cleanliness and consistency of quality.

Q: How hot or how cold do they get?

A: When heated, they are calibrated and timed, based on the product weight and microwave wattage, to reach an internal product temperature of 65 – 70 degrees Centigrade for on-the-body temperature transfer of 38 – 45 degrees Centigrade with 20 minutes of thermal therapy. When frozen they will decrease skin temperature by within 10 degrees Centigrade and can be safely maintained for 15 minutes, through **THERMAHEAL™**'s heat exchange and absorption properties.

Q: How do you care for a **THERMAHEAL™**? How long will it last?

A: It will last for several years, but we recommend 3 - 5 years with proper hygiene. Remember, it's an agricultural product and if you've ever seen a magic bag that all too often has been kept around for 5 - 10 years stored in all kinds of places, including under a bed, then you (and your clients) will appreciate the proper storage and hygiene recommendations for **THERMAHEAL™** wraps. Using draping or a towel between the wrap and your client is also suggested.

Although it is used for moist heat when spritzed or dampened with distilled water, remember to air dry the wrap thoroughly before storing, preferably in its sealed freezer bag. Not so much because any of the products needs to be refrigerated or frozen, but because that will be the first place anyone should go when they have an injury. And no one likes to struggle with ice cubes, hardened gel packs or waste edible frozen food products.

Q: What else is there about **THERMAHEAL™** wraps that make it a different and better product?

A: The first thing you'll notice is the beautiful construction from luxurious materials in a range of luscious colors such as chocolate, raspberry and blueberry. They are flexible and contour perfectly, even when frozen.



They also come with client education materials to help your clients communicate with you about the appropriate use of hot and cold therapy to maximize their healing benefits. No other product offers therapeutic guidelines that reinforce what you've been saying to them all along about using heat and cold. It helps clients work with you on their therapy and achieve greater results because they will finally understand how hot and cold therapy works to help their body speed recovery and healing time.

Q: What if an RMT orders and tries a **THERMAHEAL™** Special wrap on clients for about a week and decides that they prefer their old way of hot and cold therapy applications?

A: Each RMT Special Wrap comes with a Fairness Guarantee. If you try it for ten days and honestly feel it doesn't measure up to your standards, return it and we will cheerfully refund all your money and do our best to make any improvements that you suggest. That seems fair, doesn't it?

**Now the real question is,
which would you rather use?**

Let us know your hot and cold therapy preferences.

RMT's can now evaluate and offer important feedback and direction on the development of a **THERMAHEAL™** Client Education Take-Home Guide on Temperature Therapy. Just send an e-mail to thermaheal@gmail.com or telephone us at (519) 880 – 8211 and ask to have an evaluation copy of the Client Take-Home Guide sent to you.

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HAND SELF-CARE

There's A Cold & Hot Wrap For That!

If your hands have been working almost non-stop for 6 or more hours a day, you may have noticed the beginning signs and symptoms of Repetitive Strain Injury. If you've been trying to minimize it with standard cold packs, you may have noticed how non-flexible, clumsy and awkward they are to use. Not only do they not fit well, but they don't cover the length of your hand. And ice water plunges are one of those uncomfortable options that you may not be able to set up between clients. What is a busy, and suffering, RMT to do?

As you already know, regular hand self-care - adequate stretching and massage - will, of course, help. Scheduling those precious minutes between clients a couple of times a day is the key. Basic Canadian labour employment standards recognize, and require, a minimum of two 15 minutes breaks during a work day to reduce worker stress. What you do with those 15 minutes, twice a day, can make a difference in reducing occupational injury, maintaining your career and your income.

Preventing over-use strain with frequent breaks and stretches for the hands, can be coupled with a far easier approach to cold - hot therapy.

An easy-to-use **THERMAHEAL** hand wrap has been exclusively created for hand-intensive careers, such as massage therapy, dentistry, music and computer software/IT professionals.

The **THERMAHEAL** hand wrap is custom-designed and measured to fit comfortably over your hand or entire forearm. At the first signs of inflammation due to over-use or injury, it can be taken directly from the freezer and is flexible enough to contour to your hand for an optimal 15 minutes of exceptional cold therapy. Depending on the style chosen, you can do one or both hands at a time.



It can also be easily used as a paraffin-free hot wrap. Sunflower or mineral oil is first applied over the hand/arm, which is then covered with a plastic film or bag. Easily slide on the microwaveable heated hand wrap and 20 minutes later, your hands will feel supple and mobile, ready to work. Best of all, there's no mess to clean-up.

Practicing hand self-care is an ease and a pleasure with a beautifully constructed and fitted **THERMAHEAL** hand wrap design. It also makes a great conversation starter, with colleagues or clients, on how cold or hot therapy can be used to reduce strain and injury to your hands and to treat RSI.

For more information contact us at:

(519) 880-8211

UPCOMING ARTICLES

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| 1 | Cold-Hot "Miracles" for Brachial Neuritis |
| 2 | Foot Wraps for Reflexology |

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FOR UPCOMING ARTICLES:

1	We welcome your ideas, comments and input
2	Let us know what you would like to hear or read about -
3	Researched topics, practical advice, suggestions or news
4	What are your practice or client challenges
5	Contributions welcome
6	Contact Us
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