

A black and white photograph of Wim Hof, the Dutch extreme endurance athlete. He is shown from the chest up, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. His hair is wet and matted, and he appears to be in a snowy or icy environment. The background is a bright, textured surface, likely snow or ice. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular area in the center of the image.

# THE JOURNEY OF THE ICEMAN

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WIM HOF'S  
SECRETS  
TO DEFYING  
SCIENCE



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

It is the dead of winter, the air is freezing and the lakes are covered in ice. Most people are warm and dry in the comforts of their homes, but there is one man who isn't. Instead, he is cutting through the ice so he can jump in the frigid water. He's not crazy. He's just, "The Iceman."

Growing up, Wim Hof was just your average curious Dutch boy. He didn't spend much time in the cold - in fact, he hated it. Instead, he spent most of his time asking many big questions about life. Because he never got satisfying answers, he often felt lost and confused.

At age 17, everything changed. On a cold winter day, he immersed himself in cold water for the first time. "I felt lost" he said. "Then one day, I felt like the cold water was calling me. I looked at the still water and knew I had to go in." In the cold he felt a connection and everything made a little bit more sense. The rest is history. His track record continues to leave scientists baffled. Here are some of the feats he has accomplished:

- *Climbing Mount Everest past the "death zone" (~7,500 meters) wearing nothing but shorts and shoes (2007)*
- *Completing a full marathon in temperatures close to  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-4^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) above the polar circle in Finland. Hof ran the entire race shirtless and finished the marathon in 5 hours and 25 minutes (2009)*
- *Taking the longest ice bath ever recorded: 1 hour 53 minutes and 12 seconds, which is a Guinness World Record.*

But his accomplishments are not limited to the cold; he also ran a marathon in the Namib Desert without any water and the list goes on and on. If you're thinking, *Wow, this guy sounds like some sort of crazy superhuman*

*or something!* you're not alone. For many years, scientists couldn't figure out what was going on in the mind and body of *The Iceman*. Maybe he was part of a different species? Maybe his body worked differently than everyone else's? They labeled him a genetic misfit and scientific mystery. Now, after many studies, we know that Wim Hof is not so unique. In fact, he is just like you or any other human being. His life wasn't always consumed by marathon races and world records. In 1995 his wife committed suicide, leaving him alone with four children. Hof was devastated and amidst his grieving and soul searching, he returned to the cold and nature for answers. It was then when he developed the technique - now known as the "Wim Hof Method" - further.

The Wim Hof Method (WHM) is accessible and designed to be used by anybody. If Wim Hof is superhuman, then his method is a way to teach others how to be superhuman as well. The most impressive thing about the Iceman is his ability to teach others to do what they thought impossible. And that's what the Wim Hof Method is all about: showing you how to break through your perceived limits and discover new mental and physical ground. His method is used by people from all walks of life - from professional athletes to business workers to people suffering from various debilitating ailments. It's as if Superman were to say, *Here's how you make your own cape and once you put it on, you'll be able to do things that you never before thought were possible*. But instead of a cape, we have a method— The Wim Hof Method.

Are you ready?

## CHAPTER 2

### WHY THE WIM HOF METHOD?

There are many practices out there that claim to radically improve your life. So why choose the Wim Hof Method? Firstly, because it is completely natural and it is simple.

#### **What is the Wim Hof Method?**

On paper, the method is simply a combination of breathing exercises, cold exposure & mindset/commitment. But these combine to become more than the sum of their parts.

The breathing techniques allow you to go deep into your inner nature. The exercises take no more than 20 minutes but can take you from a state of stress to relaxation in a matter of minutes. Unlike meditation, the breathing exercises are physically demanding, which means that you exert a lot of energy and still end up in a calm and peaceful state.

The cold exposure is a way of tapping into your inner fire. Not only does it quiet your, “monkey mind”, which is often worrying non-stop about life’s uncertainties, but it triggers a healthy stress response, allowing your body to heal itself from within.

The stretching and meditation are meant to keep you centered, allowing your body and mind to realign so you can lead a balanced and fulfilling life.

#### **Why should people do it?**

This method is basically for everyone who wants to supercharge their inner strength. It’s for anyone who wants to increase the sense of ‘feeling alive’, enhance their overall well-being and feeling more centered. The Wim Hof Method has many benefits. And the more widespread this

method becomes, the more we are realizing that this method can alleviate many different ailments, some of which we've never even heard of! In short, this method can help you to:

- *Increase your Energy*
- *Heightened Focus & Determination*
- *Reduce Stress Levels*
- *Reconnect with Nature*
- *Better Sleep*
- *Influence your Immune System*
- *Improve Sport Performance*
- *Grow Stronger Physically and Mentally*
- *Enhanced Creativity*

Now, you may be thinking: “this sounds way too good to be true!” and you are partially right. It is pretty spectacular. That’s why we created this book in the first place, to SHOW people like you how amazing it feels. So if your intellect is questioning all of this, we have no rebuttal other than, “try it and see for yourself.” Wim always says, “Feeling is understanding”.

### **Who should NOT do the Wim Hof Method?**

As much as we'd like to say that this method is for everyone, it's not. If you think that the method is a cure for your disease, think again. If you are someone looking for a magic pill rather than making the effort, then it's probably not a good fit. This method is not for those looking for shortcuts.

**The Wim Hof Method is not suitable during pregnancy or for those with epilepsy. Persons with cardiovascular health issues, or any other (serious) health conditions, should always consult a medical doctor before starting with the Wim Hof Method**

## CHAPTER 3

### WHAT EXACTLY IS THE WIM HOF METHOD?

The WHM consists of three pillars: breathing exercises, cold exposure, and mindset/commitment.

#### **Breathing exercises**

The breathing exercises have many effects, both mental and physiological. With the WHM breathing exercises, your body consumes a lot of oxygen in a short time. This allows the cells in your body to produce more ATP, which are the energy suppliers in your body. Since oxygen plays a vital role in generating energy in the body, these breathing exercises lead to higher energy levels overall.

This practice will induce a positive stress response. That means that your body goes into “fight-or-flight” mode, releasing adrenaline and increasing your focus. Inducing a physical stressor whilst staying calm and focused at the same time teaches you to be more resilient in other stressful circumstances. The breathing exercises also induce temporary blood alkalosis (turning your blood more alkaline) and increasing your pain threshold in return.

On a practical level, the breathing exercises relax you, calm you down and center you. Many of our students use the breathing exercises as a way to calm the mind when they are feeling stressed out. The exercises can help you feel more awake in the morning, and can help you fall asleep at night.

#### **Cold Exposure**

Contrary to what your friends and family may think, the cold can be your warm friend. We live in a society today that is quite ‘comfortable’ compared to our ancestors. When we are hot, we turn on the air con-



ditioner. When we are cold, we turn on the heater or put on a warm sweater. The truth is, we have mistaken ‘comfortable’ for ‘healthy’. A cold shower may not feel comfortable at first, but it is exceedingly healthy for the body. Immersing yourself in cold water also elicits a positive stress response throughout the body - in a similar manner to the breathing exercises already described. When this happens, the body starts pumping out positive, ‘feel-good’ hormones while clearing the mind, increasing your focus and giving you an immediate energy boost.

By training with the cold, you are training your circulatory system. When this system does its job properly, the body simply functions better as it is continuously supplied with oxygen and energy. This essentially flushes the system and increases your vitality. A positively induced stress response is also very healthy for you, however since a stress response similar to running away from a lion is activated, having the right mindset is also crucial.

## **Mindset/Commitment**

Like anything in life, your mindset dictates your experience. To paraphrase the Buddha, “Our life is the creation of our mind.” Shakespeare meant something similar when he said, “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

Why are we quoting Shakespeare and the Buddha? To ensure that you understand the importance of mindset. With the wrong attitude, this technique simply will not work to its fullest potential. For example, if you don’t trust the method or yourself, you will quit early during your cold showers before giving your body a chance to work its wonders. Cultivating a ‘strong’ and positive mindset is a critical part of our method. That’s why we have an entire pillar dedicated to it! When you have a positive mindset and are fully committed, it’ll help you go deeper in your breathing and cold exposure practices. And even better than that, you’ll be able to take that mindset and incorporate it into your

daily life: going to work, dealing with family issues, and more. Remember what Shakespeare said, “thinking makes it so.” This pillar of the Wim Hof Method can help you to see life through a positive lens no matter what.

### **Who can benefit from the Wim Hof Method?**

Positive results are not guaranteed, but the Wim Hof Method can help with many different conditions - the countless testimonials attest to this. Some speak of, ‘miracle cures’ while others simply overcome their fear of the cold or improve sports performance. There are three main ways in which this method can benefit you: healing the body, reaching optimal performance, and reconnecting with nature.

### **Alleviating Ailments**

Many people find the Wim Hof Method to work nicely as a complement (or alternative) to modern medicine. It could certainly be a natural way to heal from a variety of conditions . The list is growing and includes among others the following:

- *Increase Pain Tolerance*
- *Decreasing insomnia and allowing for better sleep*
- *Alleviating symptoms of depression, fatigue, and chronic pain*
- *Breaking bad habits such as drug addictions and dependencies*
- *Speeding up the recovery process for broken bones and other ailments*
- *Improving blood circulation, leading to more energy*
- *Turning a weak immune system into a powerful and healthy one*
- *Overcoming fear of the cold and chronic behavior to cold exposure such as “shivers”*
- *Lowering levels of stress and anxiety*

## **Reaching Optimal Performance**

Many athletes, instructors and health fanatics use this method for the following benefits:

- *Gaining more energy in life as well as while performing/training*
- *Improved focus, concentration, and creativity*
- *Better recovery times*
- *Heightened awareness and determination*

## **Reconnecting With Nature**

The Wim Hof Method helps you connect with your own personal truth through feeling and experiencing real life without any blind faith. That means you may experience short stints of complete bliss, confidence, gratitude, and love. You may feel reconnected with nature, you may feel reconnected with yourself and your inner being. We don't promote any religious doctrines or sacred texts - all we do is promote LOVE. This method will show you how to tap into your own inner fire and discover your own true nature, regardless of whatever beliefs you already hold.

## **Scientific Proof**

If you're still skeptical of this method, we don't blame you. Scientists were skeptical for decades. But now with the help of science, we know that the Iceman is no anomaly.

In 2011, under medical supervision, Wim was injected with flu inducing endotoxins and demonstrated that he could control his autonomic immune response. He also raised his cortisol levels and lowered his body's inflammatory response using his natural technique of breathing and meditation. The immune system is part of the autonomic nervous system, and according to medical opinion at that time, the autonomic nervous system could not be actively influenced.

In 2013, Wim trained twelve others to do the same. Researchers Matthijs Kox and Peter Pickkers examined to see whether others were

also capable of influencing their immune system and autonomic nervous system by practicing the Wim Hof Method. After only four days of in-person training, twelve other test subjects were brought under scientific observation to put the Wim Hof Method to the test. The blood results of the group trained by Wim Hof unequivocally demonstrated that the autonomic nervous system and immune system can be influenced. The results proved that Wim Hof isn't a super human with extraordinary genes. His trainees were able to accomplish the same feat in controlling their autonomic nervous system and the fact that they only needed four days of preparation left the scientists in a state of amazement and awe!

Wim Hof is also mentioned in a university textbook in a chapter called, "Testing the Iceman", where they use his story as a case study. To this day, there are many scientific studies in the works, as new discoveries continue to unfold. In the latest published study by Wayne State University, the following was stated: "They also suggest the compelling possibility that the WHM might allow practitioners to develop higher level of control over key components of the autonomic system, with implications for lifestyle interventions that might ameliorate multiple clinical syndrome." If you want to get into the nitty-gritty, please find a few helpful links here:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24799686>

<https://www.wimhofmethod.com/science>

## CHAPTER 4

### DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS

**Warning - important message, please read carefully:**

**The breathing exercise has a profound effect and should be practiced in the way it is explained. Always do the breathing exercise in a safe environment (e.g. sitting on a couch/floor) and without force. Never practice the exercises before or during diving, driving, swimming, taking a bath or in any other environment/place where should you pass out, a serious injury could occur. Wim Hof breathing may cause tingling sensations and/or lightheadedness. There is a very small chance to faint and lose consciousness, if it happens it means that you went too far. Take a step back next time.**

#### **How to do Wim Hof Method Breathing**

##### **Step 1: Get comfortable**

Find a comfortable place to do your breathing exercises where you won't be disturbed. The fewer distractions, the better. You can change positions throughout the exercise, so it doesn't really matter how you start. We recommend you start by sitting down or lying on your back. **DO NOT** perform these exercises whilst driving or standing up!

##### **Step 2: Do 30-40 breaths (until you feel charged)**

Once you're comfortable, you can start to breathe in and out 30 times. The number of breaths required prior to retention varies from person to person; 30 is a common benchmark, but it is best to do as many as are required to feel light or tingly in the head and body. Breathe deeply at a

steady pace, in and out, through the mouth or nose. As you inhale, you should feel your belly rise, and on the exhale, you should feel your belly fall. As you passively exhale, do not force the air out or actively hold back. Simply let the air flow out by relaxing your torso and diaphragm. The more relaxed you are, the more effective the exhale. It may feel a bit like you are hyperventilating, but you are always in control. You may also feel a tingling or lightheaded sensation throughout your whole body when you do this. This is perfectly normal, but remember that if you ever start to feel dizzy or lightheaded, you should stop. Breathing should be smooth and circular. Do not stop and start, just let it happen naturally as you get in a rhythm. Then, when you are ready..

### **Step 3: Hold your breath**

After doing 30-40 deep breaths, breathe out and retain the breath-hold for as long as you can, without force. During the retention, we recommend that you close your eyes and focus on the space between your eyes. Avoid self-analytical thoughts, since retention times are longest when you are in the flow. The less you think or worry about needing oxygen, the deeper you will go.

Remember to set a stopwatch if you are interested in recording your results. You might want to see how you progress with the breath retentions, if you plan to do this regularly over a set period of time.

### **Step 4: Breathe in and hold for 10-15 seconds**

After retention, take a deep breath in and hold it for a further 10-15 seconds (or whatever feels right) before exhaling.

### **Step 5: Repeat steps 1-4**

Repeat the entire process for another three rounds. Remember to mark your times if you want to track your progress.

## **Step 6 (optional): Meditate after your last round of breathing**

After the deep breaths, you can then go into your regular practice of meditation. If you're a complete beginner, just start with a couple minutes by closing your eyes, bringing your awareness to your breath and focusing on the space between your eyes.

Over time, you can gradually increase the amount of time you spend in meditation after the deep breaths, but five minutes is sufficient for a beginner. These breathing exercises may bring you sensations that feel completely new, so it's important to spend some time gathering your thoughts and quieting the mind afterward.

## **How to begin with cold exposure**

### **Cold showers**

Once you practice the WHM, your relationship with the shower will change forever. You do not need to begin by taking a long cold shower. Simply start by taking a normal (warm) shower, but finish your shower with 30 seconds of cold. Do that for one week. After one week, increase the duration to one minute of cold water at the end of each shower. Continue increasing your time until you are able to take a cold shower for 10 minutes. That's right, 10 full minutes of cold exposure. Once you get to this level, you are going to feel AMAZING.

Before you immerse yourself in the cold, prepare yourself mentally. Have you ever seen a serious weightlifter before he performs a heavy lift? They focus their mind on the task at hand. Like the weightlifter, you want to be as focused and calm as possible.

Next, enter the cold shower. Remain relaxed and do your best not to tense up. To gradually improve your performance, seek the highest degree of cold exposure that you can handle while keeping a relaxed state throughout the body. Never force it.

Once you get out of the water, observe the sensations you experience. Being comfortable while feeling cold and (slowly) warming up is just as essential as being comfortable while enduring the cold. Your body may continue to shiver as it recovers, but remember to stay calm and trust yourself.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE WIM HOF METHOD COMMUNITY

The Wim Hof Method attracts people who share a lot of positive qualities. Our followers are always inspiring us with their stories and ability to overcome life's challenges. We often remind them that more than the method, more than Wim Hof himself, you are the master of your own destiny. This method attracts people who think outside the box. When you become a part of this community you'll see that it's one big family. Most people are going to think you are crazy when you tell them how much you enjoy taking cold showers. Your spouse may not love the fact that you are doing these breathing exercises while enjoying their morning coffee, but don't worry - the WHM community is there to support you. Imagine what you could accomplish if everyone surrounding you would never let you quit. How much harder would you try? How much more confidence would you have? Well, that's what the WHM community has to offer. A group of like-minded, motivated, and big-hearted people.

Innerfire is run unlike any other company. Most businesses have one goal: maximize profit. The priority with Innerfire is helping people. The more research done, the less skeptical the world becomes of this method, and the more people can benefit. The members of our com-



munity are ambassadors of the Wim Hof Method, which has spread across the globe. Our community is filled with warriors. Each person has his and her own inspiring story to share, and we really hope to hear about your inspiring story soon.

If you're ready to start taking control of your breath, your body and your life, [click here](#) to get started.

More case studies and testimonials: <https://www.wimhofmethod.com/testimonials>