



THE URBAN SPA EXPERIENCE

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BENEFITS: A WORLD OF HEALTH & BEAUTY AT BANYA 5
Discover Why Bathing Traditions Have Long Been a Part of Many Cultures

"Nature refuses to be mismanaged for long."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

SEATTLE (November 2004) – When we are hot, we are naturally drawn to coolness, and when we are cold, we seek heat. It's about homeostasis: The body always knows what it needs to stay in balance. Nature has provided many places in the world with naturally warm, mineral pools that have become centers for community around the world. As more people discover the health benefits of **Banya 5**, a community is sprouting up around this new downtown Russian bathhouse - an essential luxury among Seattleites.

"Experiencing the contrast between hot and cold is important when we can, without much effort, live in a climate controlled life. It's a visceral reaction to go between the hot and the cold, something your body needs to stay healthy and aware," says Naomi Hoang, N.D., a graduate of the Bastyr program for Naturopathic Medicine.

Continues Hoang: "You become more sensitized to your five basic senses. The contrast of 200-degree, penetrating, moist, radiant heat and refreshing plunges in the 55-degree cold pool at the Banya fine tunes your senses and your innate sense of wellbeing. Experiencing the hot and cold helps you reclaim your senses. We don't experience contrasts in a static world - and that is by design. You notice after a few visits, your body will naturally start to yearn for the Banya experience and the benefits it brings."

The circulatory system, adjusting to the contrasts between hot and cold, creates a pump that gets the blood and lymph moving and removes wastes from the body. Keeping the lymph and blood systems in high performance can mean that disease does not find a home.

“Your body has twice as much lymphatic fluid as it does blood for good reason: The lymphatic system filters out spent blood cells, bacteria and proteins making way for the blood to bring in oxygen and nutrients,” says Hoang. “When your lymphatic and circulatory systems are pumping, you can eliminate fluid retention, cleanse your body, and eliminate toxins and trapped proteins in your tissues.”

Preventing stagnation in all your systems is important. The movement of the blood and lymph helps stimulate the immune system and the parasympathetic nervous system. This helps reduce the swelling of scars and joint injuries, and the deep relaxation from this alleviates stress and the insomnia and depression associated with it.

As part of its circulatory system-enhancing experience, **Banyan 5** also offers signature body treatments that incorporate salts for exfoliation, hydration and massage. Raw honey stimulates the movement of proteins and enzymes out to the skin layers. The charge the cells receive from the salts helps the skin excrete wastes and absorb oxygen into the lymph and blood. Consequently, the oxygen supply to the body is improved and the increased fluid exchange helps detoxify, as wastes removed make way for nutrients.

The body treatments are made even more effective when warmed by Banyan 5's steam and radiant-heat sauna, which penetrate down to the bone. Alternating the heat with cold-pool plunges or showers helps to balance all of the body's systems. You can literally feel the difference, says Hoang.

Improved circulation allows the body to treat itself, and the resultant vitality is an indicator of good health. Increased circulation helps sweep tissues and exchange-removing, metabolic wastes. Capillaries dilate and push more waste out of the blood and into the lymphatic system, to be carried away and processed. As the largest organ of elimination in the body, the skin excretes much of this waste through

the pores. Dry skin brushing (always sweeping toward the heart) before entering the steam or sauna maximizes the benefits. Chronic and subtle aches disappear and waste products are excreted.

According to a recent study by plastic surgeons and cited in The New York Times, gravity is not the culprit in visible signs of aging. Rather, it's a lack of fullness to the face caused by tightened muscles, improper alignment and dehydration. The Banya helps re-hydrate those muscles, returning a more youthful appearance. Regular massage, combined with bathing, helps to keep the body supple. Likewise, it's not sagging that causes a double chin. Rather, it's tightening along the upper body and back, thus shortening these muscles. Massage and body treatments help the body hold itself in proper alignment. When warm and hydrated, these same muscles aren't shortened, but stretch long and full of movement. This is why the Banya is traditionally frequented by yoga practitioners and dancers.

But these are not the only benefits. Bathing at the Banya also has a profound effect on circadian rhythms - or sleep. As the nervous system is balanced by the alternating, deep radiant heat and invigorating cold, all the parasympathetic systems are reset, giving a deep and relaxing sleep, waking up refreshed.

Experience the penetrating, radiant heat and refreshing cool waters of **Banya 5**, and you may start to experience the rest of your day in a new way.

Interviews may be arranged by calling (425) 451-4387.

Photographs available for download at <http://www.banya5.com/gallery/>

Banya 5, located in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood at 217 Ninth Avenue North, is open Tuesday from 5 to 10 pm, Wednesday from Noon to 9 pm, Thursday and Friday from 2 to 10 pm, Saturday from 10 am to 10 pm and on Sundays from 10 am to 8 pm, with Wednesdays exclusive to women and Thursdays, men only. The facility is closed to the public on Monday. For more information call (206) 262-1234 or log on to the web site at www.banya5.com. The establishment accepts Visa, Mastercard or cash.