

# This New Cellulite Basher Might Actually Work. Hint: It Involves A Bike



IS A HYDRO BIKE THE ULTIMATE CELLULITE CURE?

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*How much do we all HATE cellulite? So much! But, says our Digital Editor, this new cellulite-busting hydro-bike treatment, might just be the answer we've all been looking for.*

I recently enrolled myself on an anti-cellulite program at a super-plush spa in Italy because, well, summer. Those leg dimples, which seem to multiply every time I stand in front of a changing room mirror, aren't going to disappear on their own, are they? And, as I was being pummelled, scrubbed, massaged, blasted, sprayed and steamed, there was one statement that stuck in my mind. Said with such conviction by the in-house diet and nutrition expert, Dr Agostina Grassi, it was this: "A hydro bike is the only thing that will get rid of cellulite."

Fighting talk, indeed. So, what is a hydro bike? Well, it's essentially spinning, but in water. *Very cold water*. But listen up, because *this* is the important part: for a hydro bike to be most effective, the body must be submerged in the cold water SLOWLY. It's this process, of your body gradually getting used to the cold water, that activates a special type of fat, known as brown fat.

Sorry, what? Brown fat, you say? Yes. Let Dr Grassi explain: "We have two types of fat in our bodies: white fat and brown fat. Most people have very little brown fat in their bodies, you'll find some on the sides of your neck, maybe some between your shoulder blades, hardly any really, but when it's activated **it burns calories** to generate warmth."

Simply put, cold temperatures kickstart this wonderful **calorie-burning fat**. It's why you'll have been reading almost constantly about [cryotherapy](#) lately. But, says Dr Grassi, treatments like [cryotherapy](#) aren't as effective as the hydro bike because of the sudden plunging of the body into the cold for a short amount of time; it's **gradual exposure to the cold** that gets the most out of this elusive brown fat.

Dr Ifeoma Ejikeme, medical director of Adonia Medical Clinic, agrees: "Studies effectively show during the first 1-7 days of acute cold weather – the time in which the body is adjusting to the cold - there is an increase in markers which show the breakdown of brown fat.

"This is also the time we shiver the most. Shivering increases the mobilisation of energy from brown fat. So, the first few days of winter - or any sporadic cold day - would lead to the greatest mobilization of brown fat/weight-loss."

This maybe so, but I wasn't going to let myself be lowered into a bath of cold water for just anybody. I needed proof. Cold (ha!), hard proof that it would be worth it. That's when Dr Grassi showed me a case study of a woman - of average build and cellulite, a lot like me - who used a hydro bike, in a tub gradually filled with 18-degree water, every day for 15 minutes. She lost 8.8lbs (4kilos) and her cellulite reduced noticeably in a week.

I was sold and, before I knew it, had slipped on the special plastic shoes (think waterproof Crocs, but even less attractive) and was peddling furiously in the cold water. The whole thing was as you'd expect: deeply unpleasant, but then, isn't all exercise? I went from "f\*\*k this is freezing" to "pah, so easy, could do this all day" and back again. I was also given kettle bells to exercise my arms, which helped warm me up and provided a welcome distraction from the cold. And then my twenty minutes were over. Just like that.

**So are hydro bike sessions worth integrating into your regular workout routine?**

Georgios Tzenichristos, fat/cellulite reduction specialist and founder of [LipoTherapeia](#), agrees that "the combination of cold and very high intensity exercise produces the best results." Though he does warn that the average person is more at risk of injury when exercising in cold. You have been warned.

Dr Clare Morrison, from [medexpress.co.uk](#), is all about it too: "It's been shown that long-term mild cold exposure encourages the body to produce more brown fat. It's beneficial for everyone to have plenty of brown fat, as it helps maintain a healthy glucose metabolism, and is effective in burning calories, so sports like the hydro-bike are a good way to stay trim."

Another major plus of the cold water hydro bike is that it's seriously circulation-boosting - great for cellulite and diminishing those dimples.

Now, this isn't a miracle cure, once there, cellulite is a stubborn bastard, but hydro bikes *in cold water* can help to reduce it. Failing that (because it's a pricey business), just go for a dip at your local lido.

For more advice, check out our InStyle guide on [how to get rid of cellulite](#).

7 other things that happen during a anti-cellulite course:

- 1. Diet.** I ate a strictly Mediterranean diet, with an emphasis on foods rich in antioxidants, like black cherries, artichoke stems, dark chocolate (1 gram per day) and green coffee.
- 2. Scrub.** During the program I had a Marine Scrub, a cocktail of sea salt and 90 oligo-elements, which helps to reduce water retention and banish those dreaded dimples, and an Olive Wrap made up of olive and peach seeds. Lesson: daily scrubs are the key.
- 3. Kneipp Therapy.** So called vascular gymnastics, which involves walking in two narrow pools, that are different temperatures, on stones, while your legs are blasted with jets and bubbles.
- 4. Oxygen anti-cellulite massage.** My legs were covered in a 100% oxygen mask, to stimulate cells and get the blood flowing. I was wrapped in cling film for 8 minutes - no more, no less - then massaged into two different ways: one was a short, jabbing action to break up cellulite, the other was a long, sweeping movement to tone muscles.
- 5. Thalaterm.** I lay in what my friends and I coined a 'steam coffin' covered in sulphuric-smelling mud and doused in hot, hot steam for 20 minutes. The aim of the game is to reduce water retention and eliminate toxins.
- 6. Hydro massage.** I sat in a bath and was blasted with jets.
- 7. Water aerobics.** Fabio pumped out the '80s tunes and put me through my paces in what was the most fun I've had exercising, possibly ever. Working out in water puts less strain on your ticker so blood flows around the body easier. Another circulation-boosting trick.

*3-day spa programmes are available at [Masseria San Domenico Thalasso Spa](#) starting from €550 per person. A hydro bike session is €70 for up to 20 minutes. Closer to home, [Hydrofit](#) (much loved by Pippa Middleton) offer 30-minute sessions for £30.*