

The Wim Hof Method



Upper Intermediate (B2-C1)

WARM-UP

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever tried a cold shower, ice bath, or swimming in cold water? How did it feel?
2. Do you think the mind can really control how the body reacts to extreme conditions?
3. Why do some people enjoy doing difficult or uncomfortable things?
4. In what ways can controlled discomfort be good for our wellbeing?

Part 2. Match each word to its correct definition.

Breathing technique

Vagus nerve

Cold exposure

Thermogenesis

Hypoxia

Immune system

Resilience

Endorphins

1. _____ A nerve that helps regulate the heart, digestion, and other functions.
2. _____ The body's defence system against illness and infection.
3. _____ Intentionally using cold temperatures for physical and mental benefits.
4. _____ The ability to recover quickly or adapt to challenges.
5. _____ A short period when the body has low oxygen levels.
6. _____ The process of generating heat inside the body.
7. _____ A method of consciously controlling your breath to influence how you feel.
8. _____ Natural chemicals that relieve pain and create feelings of pleasure.

Part 3. Complete each sentence with the correct word or phrase.

Breathing technique

Vagus nerve

Cold exposure

Thermogenesis

Hypoxia

Immune system

Resilience

Endorphins

1. After practising Wim Hof's _____, many people feel calmer and more focused.
2. Athletes often use _____ to reduce inflammation and recover faster.
3. When oxygen levels drop temporarily, the body enters a state of _____.
4. The release of _____ after exercise can boost your mood and relieve pain.
5. A strong _____ helps your body fight illness and stay balanced.
6. _____ helps the body produce heat and adapt to cold conditions.
7. The _____ links the brain with key organs and supports relaxation.
8. Developing emotional _____ helps us handle stress and challenges better.

READING ACTIVITY

Part 1. Read the text about Wim Hof's methods, focusing on cold exposure, breathing techniques, and their benefits.

The Wim Hof Method combines deep breathing, gradual cold exposure, and focused mindset training.

Wim Hof, known as The Iceman, believes that by consciously connecting the mind and body, we can improve our health, energy, and resilience.

His breathing technique involves deep, rhythmic breaths followed by brief breath-holds. This creates short periods of hypoxia, activating the vagus nerve and calming the nervous system. It also releases endorphins, promoting focus and a natural sense of wellbeing.

Cold exposure—through cold showers, ice baths, or time in nature—activates thermogenesis, the body's ability to generate heat. Over time, this strengthens circulation, reduces inflammation, and improves sleep.

Many followers report more energy, stronger immunity, and greater mental clarity. Scientists are now exploring how the Wim Hof Method can help regulate the stress response and support emotional health.

Part 2. Answer the following questions based on the text.

1. What three main elements make up the Wim Hof Method?
2. How does the breathing technique affect the body and mind?
3. What happens during thermogenesis?
4. How does cold exposure influence stress and mood?
5. Why do people describe this practice as empowering?

VIDEO ACTIVITY

Part 1. Watch the video where Wim Hof explains the top 10 reasons to practise cold exposure. As you watch, make a list of the 10 reasons he gives.

Reasons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Part 2. Decide if each statement is true (T) or false (F) based on the video. If false, can you correct it?

1. Cold exposure helps lower inflammation in the body.
2. Going into the cold strengthens the immune system.
3. "Interoception" means our awareness of what's happening inside the body.
4. Cold exposure weakens our ability to focus.
5. The cold activates hormones like dopamine and serotonin.



Part 3. Complete the missing parts of the quotes from the video.

1. "Going into the cold helps boost your _____ system, making you stronger."
2. "Cold exposure improves blood _____, helping oxygen and nutrients reach your cells."
3. "By going into the cold, you train your _____, making it easier to handle stress."
4. "Cold exposure can help reduce _____, which is linked to many diseases."
5. "Going into the cold releases feel-good hormones like _____ and serotonin."

VIDEO FOLLOW-UP

Part 1. Share your thoughts on the video using the questions below.

1. What surprised you about his approach?
2. How do you think his methods could benefit your health?
3. Why do you think people are interested in practising cold exposure?
4. Do you believe these techniques could help you manage stress?

Part 2. Read the dialogue and discuss what the bold expressions mean.

Tom: Have you heard about the Wim Hof Method? It's all about cold exposure, breathing techniques, and all that. I've been giving it a go.

Jake: Yeah, I've heard of it! But I'll be honest, I've got **cold feet** about trying it. Ice baths sound brutal.

Tom: I thought the same at first, but once you **break the ice**, it's actually amazing. Gives you a huge energy boost!

Jake: Hmm... I dunno. I can barely handle a cold shower. I gave it a go once and my body just went into shock.

Tom: That's normal at first. You've just gotta push through. It helps with stress, inflammation, and all sorts. It's only the **tip of the iceberg** when it comes to the benefits.

Jake: Yeah, but isn't it dangerous if you're not used to it? Feels like you're **on thin ice** messing with your body like that.

Tom: Nah, as long as you do it properly, it's safe. It actually strengthens your immune system and makes you more resilient. You should try it again.

Jake: Hmm... Alright, maybe I will. But if I start shivering like mad, don't give me the **cold shoulder**, yeah?

Tom: Never, Jake. I'll be there with a towel and a cup of tea.

Part 3. Match each idiom to its correct definition.

Break the ice

Give someone the cold shoulder

Get cold feet

On thin ice

Tip of the iceberg

1. _____ To ignore someone or treat them in an unfriendly way.
2. _____ A small part of a much bigger problem or situation.
3. _____ To be in a risky or dangerous situation.
4. _____ To hesitate or feel nervous about doing something at the last moment.
5. _____ To start a conversation and make people feel at ease.

Part 4. Complete each sentence with your own ideas.

1. The last time I had to **break the ice** was when...
2. Someone once **gave me the cold shoulder** because...
3. I **got cold feet** before...
4. I was **on thin ice** when...
5. I realised something was just the **tip of the iceberg** when...

REFLECTION

Discuss the questions below to reflect on what you've learnt during this lesson.

1. Would you ever try cold therapy or breathwork? Why or why not?
2. How could the Wim Hof mindset be applied to other challenges in life?
3. What does this lesson teach about the connection between mind and body?
4. What's one small discomfort you could embrace to grow stronger?



WRAP-UP TASK (OPTIONAL HOMEWORK)

Try one of these and write a short reflection (80–100 words):

- Take a 30-second cold shower each morning for three days. Describe how it made you feel.
- Practise a simple breathing routine before bed and note any change in your sleep or mood.
- Reflect on a time when you overcame fear or discomfort — what did you learn from it?

