

Professor Green trying out the CryoSlimming



# Ice ice baby

No longer just a reference in sci-fi films, we are finally waking up to the benefits of cryotherapy. We brave the sub-zero temperatures at Victoria's new chamber

BY JONATHAN WHILEY

**S**ylvester Stallone introduced me to cryotherapy. Sort of. The first time I watched 1993 sci-fi flick *Demolition Man* (kids, ask your Dad) Sly – alongside Wesley Snipes – is cryogenically frozen in a new 'Californian cryo prison'. Readers, it was ahead of its time.

Fast-forward 26 years and I'm about to enter a cryotherapy chamber in Victoria. except this time it's not – admittedly – to do with saving the world. LondonCryo is the latest addition to Eccleston Yards, increasingly a hub for health and fitness with a slew of LA-style neighbours.

It's only been open a matter of days when I arrive, but this once other-worldly treatment is proving popular. Aussie owner Maria Ensabella, a resident, is delighted at the response so far. She has been on the lookout for a site in the area for quite some time, having established a strong audience in the City with its first clinic.

Maria, who has a corporate background, changed career paths after a eureka moment in 2011 when she was in bed listening to a podcast by American author Tony Robbins. "He was

saying how he did cryotherapy and it was helping reduce any inflammation or muscle soreness that he had, always being on his feet," she says. "I tried to find somewhere in London to do that and there was nothing available."

After experiencing whole body cryotherapy on a trip to New York, she fell in love with it. "It just gave me lots of energy," she says. "I had been for a run that morning through Central Park and it just gave me a boost of energy. I was there for two weeks and so I booked a course of treatments to get the most benefit and then thought: 'How am I going to do this at home?'"

The City site opened three years ago, before its recent arrival in Victoria, which has added an Infrared Sauna treatment. Ice and fire – very *Game Of Thrones* – are in vogue.

My treatment begins with 25 minutes in the sauna, which hovers at a very toasty 67 degrees

for the duration. At the 15-minute mark I'm beginning to feel like a slow-roasted rotisserie chicken, but manage to last the course (45 minutes is also available if you can hack it).

After a quick shower (also in the same private room), you are instructed to don white gloves, socks and a fluffy robe and told to dry yourself as much as possible to prevent any possible frostbite onset (gulp).

As I make my way to another room where the cryotherapy chamber lies, I pass rapper Professor Green who is waiting for the sauna. At first this is disconcerting (particularly in a robe) and then quite reassuring. It turns out he can't get enough of London Cryo and is a regular visitor, as his Instagram posts attest to.

I'm a little anxious at the thought of stepping into a chamber pre-cooled to minus 100 degrees, but Maria is a comforting presence. When I do step inside and the door closes (your head is outside the chamber at all times), the temperature plummets to 130 degrees.

"As long as it goes to minus 110 or colder, you are going to get the cryotherapy benefits," says Maria. "It triggers flight or fight and the brain sends a message to the blood to say: 'Oh my god, it's freezing' so it rushes to your core area."

Once I remove my robe and hand it over the door, my two minutes begins (all introductory sessions are two minutes and three minutes thereafter). And yes, it's freezing, obviously. But, to my surprise, not unbearably so. Every 15 seconds I rotate 90 degrees and I can feel the blood rushing as the vapour circles.

"It oxygenates the blood and replenishes nutrients, flushes out toxins and releases endorphins," says Maria.

No question it's incredibly invigorating and easy to see why 70 per cent of clients use it for sports recovery (with another 20 per cent for pain management, dealing with the likes of autoimmune disease).

Next up it's CryoSkin, a non-invasive facial with a cool probe that feels like a flavourless Solero lolly being applied.

This is all about aesthetics; increasing collagen production to provide a smoother, firmer face. It provides instant, very visible results and is a real pick-me-up, particularly if you're heading to an event or special occasion.

There is also CryoSlimming available at the clinic – to freeze and kill off unwanted fat cells – and the fantastically named CryoSkin Double Chin treatment, which suggests a whole new Demolition Man entirely.

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