



Compass Therapy Centre

Oxygen Therapy Good To Know Guide



Introduction

This booklet contains important information about the Oxygen Therapy treatment you are about to begin. Please read it thoroughly before you attend for your first session. If you have any questions, please contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

What is Oxygen Therapy?

Oxygen Therapy (also referred to as Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy) is a well-established and highly effective treatment in the field of hyperbaric medicine. We have been providing it at the Centre for 40 years.

It works on the principle that oxygen is essential for the body to heal, recover and regenerate. Where the body is working harder to deal with the symptoms of a long-term condition or injury, for example, then providing it with higher-than-normal levels of oxygen can be very beneficial. We frequently use Oxygen Therapy in conjunction with other therapies, to treat a wide range of conditions and health concerns.

What Are the Benefits?

The effects of many long-term conditions or injuries often linger because the body can't get enough oxygen to fuel healing and recovery. Oxygen Therapy saturates the body with oxygen, improving blood flow to damaged tissues and organs, helping clear the body of the toxins which inhibit healing, and enhancing the action of white blood cells in fighting infection. It can also be beneficial in dealing with the specific symptoms of some conditions including improving sleep, reducing fatigue, and helping lift 'brain fog'.

What Conditions Can It Help?

Scientific research and clinical practice have proven oxygen therapy to be a safe and effective treatment for a wide range of conditions. Research is ongoing, and we update our practice on a regular basis to reflect new research findings.



We use Oxygen Therapy to improve a wide range of conditions and concerns including:

- Neurological conditions – e.g. MS, ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia, Stroke, Long COVID, Migraine, Cluster headaches, Traumatic Brain Injury, Cerebral Palsy & Lyme Disease.
- Other long-term conditions – e.g. Crohn’s and Colitis
- Wound healing – e.g. surgical wounds, skin grafts and leg ulcers
- Recovery – e.g. from cancer treatment and musculoskeletal injuries

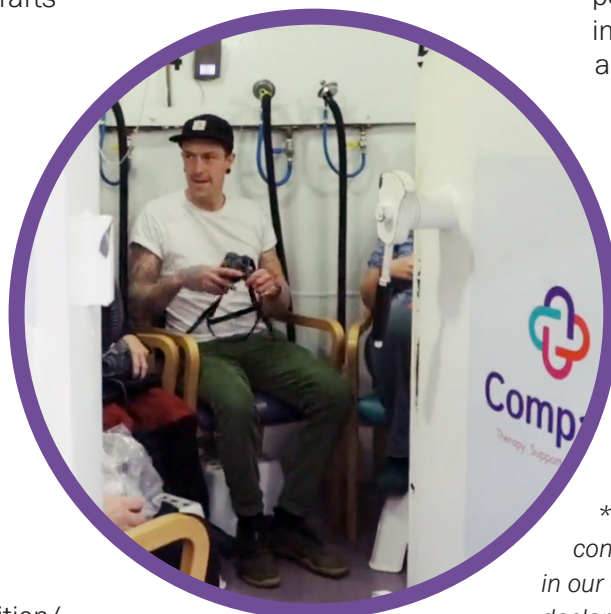
How Does It Work?

During Oxygen Therapy, you are seated comfortably in our Oxygen Chamber with other clients and you breath normally through a mask.

The air inside the chamber contains around 94-98% oxygen (as opposed to around 21% outside) and the chamber is pressurised to up to 2 times normal atmospheric pressure. The pressure helps the body absorb more oxygen than it would normally.

Oxygen Therapy Protocols

We administer Oxygen Therapy in line with condition/ symptom-specific treatment protocols which are approved and recognised within the field of hyperbaric medicine. You can’t have Oxygen Therapy at Compass, without first undergoing a full suitability assessment with one of our professionals. The information you provide at your assessment about your condition, symptoms and medications will be used to determine the correct protocol for you.*



Initial Protocol (Saturation)

Your initial treatment protocol will specify the pressure level that is right for you and the number of sessions you’ll need to have within a certain period to make sure your body is saturated with oxygen. This varies from client to client but usually involves a minimum of 3 sessions per week over a 3-5-week period. This initial protocol is intensive but it is essential that you complete it for you to achieve the best results.

Maintenance Protocol

Once your initial protocol is complete, it’s important to maintain your oxygenation levels with regular maintenance sessions in the chamber. This will help you experience the best outcomes. Our Oxygen Therapy team will advise on the frequency and pressure level that’s right for you to maintain the benefit of your treatment.

**Compass does not provide medical advice, diagnose health conditions, or prescribe treatments. Access to, and participation in our oxygen therapy service is based on an assessment of the self-declared information you have provided on your client registration regarding your condition, symptoms and medications. Your treatment protocol is based on existing evidence within the field of hyperbaric medicine. These procedures ensure we have mitigated, where possible, any risks.*



Preparing for Your First Session

We recommend that you:

- Avoid caffeine, smoking, recreational drugs, and dairy products prior to your session.
- Eat something before your session. The chamber environment can lower your blood sugar level temporarily.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. Light, removable layers are best as the chamber can get very warm during the session.
- Arrive 20 minutes before your appointment time to fill out any forms.
- Allow around 75 minutes for your first session.

Arriving at the Centre

You will:

- Be welcomed by our friendly, front-of-house team.
- Fill out any forms.
- Have the facilities in the Centre explained to you.
- Be introduced to the Oxygen Chamber Operator who will oversee your session.
- Have a health and safety briefing.
- Store all personal belongings including handbags, hearing aids, lighters etc in a locker.
- Change into more comfortable clothing and go to the toilet if you want to.

During Your Session

You can expect to:

- Be shown through to the Oxygen Chamber.
- Be shown how to talk to the Chamber Operator during the session if you need to.
- Have help to get settled and with fitting your mask.
- Relax and breathe normally throughout the session.
- Experience an odd sensation and to feel warmer as the chamber comes up to pressure.
- Hear instructions from the Chamber Operator at various points in the session. For your safety, you must follow any instructions the Chamber Operator gives you.
- Be able to read or to use your mobile devices in “flight-mode”.
- To remove your mask occasionally to have a sip of water. No other food or drink is allowed in the chamber.
- Feel cooler and sometimes for a mist to form as the chamber depressurises at the end of your session.

After Your Session

Our front-of-house team will:

- Take payment for your session if you haven't already paid.
- Make sure you are booked in for your next session to continue your protocol.
- Remind you of our cancellation policy if you are unable to attend or if you change your mind.
- Explain how to get in touch if you have any questions once you get home.
- Remind you to collect any belongings you have left in the lockers.

Common Questions

Will someone help me with my mask?

At your first session, you'll be shown how to fit your mask correctly and how to test the seal. In follow-up sessions, you will normally fit your mask yourself, but our team will be happy to check it for you if you are unsure and will obviously be happy to help anyone who needs assistance.

What happens if I feel uncomfortable or unwell during the session?

There is an alarm cord and an intercom inside the chamber which allows you to speak to the Chamber Operator throughout the session. If you are feeling uncomfortable, unwell or in pain, pull the alarm cord and the Chamber Operator will take appropriate action, which may include removing you from the session if necessary.

Do I need to breathe more deeply during Oxygen Therapy?

No, just relax and breathe normally. Please do not hold your breath at any point during the session.

What should I expect to experience during the session?

You may hear a rush of air at the start of the session. This is completely normal. You may also feel pressure in your ears like being on a plane. This can usually be cleared by swallowing with your mouth and nose closed or by pinching your nose and blowing gently through your nostrils. Wearing in-ear headphones can also sometimes reduce this.

What happens if there is an emergency in the chamber during my session?

Pull the alarm cord to alert the Chamber Operator who will immediately follow our emergency procedures.

What happens if there is an emergency in the Centre during my session?

We have procedures in place for this which we test regularly. If there is an emergency in the Centre which requires us to evacuate the building, please follow the directions of the Chamber Operator calmly and quickly. Assistance will be provided for those who need it.

Can I join the session if I'm running late?

No. For our sessions to run smoothly and as a courtesy to other participants, they begin on the scheduled start time. We are unable to delay the session for late arrivals and a cancellation fee will be due if you miss the start of the session. Please plan to arrive at the Centre 15 minutes before your session starts to allow yourself time to put your belongings in the lockers etc.





When Should You Not Have Oxygen Therapy?

Oxygen therapy is very safe, but in general, you should NOT have this treatment if you:

- Are pregnant
- Have heart failure
- Have a pacemaker
- Have a collapsed lung, or certain lung conditions
- Have a history of inner ear problems/sinus problems
- Have a history of epilepsy
- Have a history of panic attacks/anxiety
- Are claustrophobic
- Take certain chemotherapy drugs
- Take the drug disulfiram (Antabuse)
- Use the topical cream Sulfamylon
- Take blood thinning medication such as Warfarin.
- Have a cold, fever, or seasonal allergies as this could increase the risk of ear pain.

What Are The Potential Side Effects & Risks of Oxygen Therapy?

As well as benefits, Oxygen Therapy can cause some side effects and carries certain risks that you should be aware of before starting your protocol. These are very rare and the procedures we follow are designed to minimise them.

Fatigue

Some people experience fatigue during their treatment protocol. This is normal and will resolve over time as the body gets used to the increased oxygenation.

Numbness

Some people notice numbness in their fingers. This is temporary and will subside.

Pain

Some people (particularly those living with Arthritis / Fibromyalgia) may experience intensification of pain during the initial stages of their protocol. This will resolve over time.

Seizures

Oxygen therapy may lower the seizure threshold and cause seizures in people with previously stable epilepsy. If you are epileptic or taking medication to control seizures, you must tell us.

Serous otitis

When breathing high concentrations of oxygen, fluid can sometimes accumulate in the ears causing a muffled feeling. This can usually be eased with decongestants. If symptoms persist it may be necessary to stop Oxygen Therapy altogether.

Optic neuritis

There have been very occasional reports of people with optic neuritis experiencing a deterioration in vision when receiving Oxygen Therapy. It should be used with caution in clients with this condition.

Near sightedness (Myopia)

Regular Oxygen Therapy can, on very rare occasions, reduce the ability to see things that are far away. This is usually temporary.

Far sightedness (Presbyopia)

Regular Oxygen Therapy can occasionally cause an improvement in the ability to see close-up or to read without glasses. Again, this is usually temporary.

Barotrauma

Some clients may experience discomfort in the ears, sinuses, or teeth. In very rare circumstances, they may experience a small tear in the lung tissue and an escape of air into surrounding tissue outside of the lungs (pneumothorax). Slow depressurisations, as is standard practice in all our sessions, minimises the risk of barotrauma, as does breathing normally

Oxygen toxicity

Breathing oxygen at pressure for extended periods can, in rare cases, cause oxygen toxicity. The risk is extremely low and we have procedures in place to mitigate it. However, if you feel any unusual symptoms such as facial twitching, nausea, ringing of the ears, visual issues, or irritability, **YOU MUST NOTIFY** the Chamber Operator immediately.



Decompression illness

Decompression illness (DCI) occurs when the pressure in the chamber causes nitrogen in the blood to be absorbed into the tissues.

As nitrogen intake is extremely limited during Oxygen Therapy, the risk of this very low.

Gas embolism

A gas embolism can occur when air bubbles are released into the blood vessels because of a rapid reduction in atmospheric pressure. This risk is minimised by our thorough pre session assessments and slow, controlled depressurisation rates.



Prescribed Medication

Certain medications DO NOT react well to Oxygen Therapy. It is important that you tell our staff what medications you are taking when you have your initial suitability assessment and of any changes in your medication as your treatment continues.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions about Oxygen Therapy after reading this leaflet, please contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

Phone Us: 0131 554 5384

Email Us: hello@wearecompass.org.uk





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