

Whirlpool and Hubbard Tanks

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The whirlpool and Hubbard tanks are more commonly found in use in institutional settings.

The whirlpool is most commonly used to treat the distal body segments of the upper and lower extremities of adults.

The Hubbard tank is commonly used to treat one or both of the upper or lower extremities, plus the trunk, to achieve a superficial change in temperature. Both units are capable of providing for relief of pain and an increase in the range of motion, and are usually selected when larger body areas are being treated with infrared due to the inconvenience of treating larger areas with other forms of infrared.

As a general rule, the water temperature of these units should not exceed 38 degrees C. during the therapeutic process, nor should the temperature drop below 10 degrees C. less than the original neutral starting temperature. Initially the drop should not exceed 5 degrees C. from the starting temperature. The neutral starting temperature should be in the range of 33-36 degrees C., the temperature drop being accomplished gradually during the treatment process.

The primary clinical entities to be treated with the whirlpool include those in which the following clinical conditions would be found on examination:

- a. Acute orthopedic trauma (initially)
- b. Acute edema (especially initially, using cold infrared wavelengths)
- c. Acute muscle spasm.

The Hubbard tank would be selected in conditions when a prominent feature of the clinical findings include moderate to severe chronic spasticity due to central nervous system lesions.

References

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