RED LIGHT SAUNA

San Francisco Bay Area Biohacking Services Guide: Sauna, Cold Plunge, Float, Cryotherapy, Hyperbaric and DEXA — What the Evidence Says and What to Ask

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Short answer: San Francisco and the inner Bay Area have one of the densest mixes of recovery and "biohacking" services in the US: bathhouses, waterfront saunas, cold plunges, float tanks, cryotherapy, red light, hospital hyperbaric units and DEXA or VO2 testing. Most of it is wellness, not medicine. Bring the city's data-first habit to every booking and ask what the evidence actually shows. If you have a medical condition, are pregnant or take prescription medicines, check with your own doctor first.

This guide is education only. It is not medical advice, and no business listed here has paid for placement. For the wider city picture, see our [San Francisco hub](/us/san-francisco).

Why the Bay Area is different

Many Bay Area clients work in tech, track sleep and heart rate on a wearable, and are used to reading dashboards. That is useful, as long as a number is not mistaken for an outcome. Cool, foggy summers and mild winters mean heat sessions feel welcome most of the year. Cold-water swimming in the Bay is also part of local culture, but open water is colder, rougher and less supervised than a studio plunge. Many people move between the city, the East Bay, Marin and the Peninsula, so this guide covers all four.

Sauna, bathhouses and cold plunge

What the evidence says. The best-known sauna data come from a Finnish observational study of 2,315 middle-aged men: more frequent traditional sauna use was associated with fewer fatal cardiovascular events and lower all-cause mortality ([Laukkanen et al., JAMA Internal Medicine, 2015](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25705824/)). Observational means association, not proof that sauna caused the benefit. Cold-water immersion has some evidence for less muscle soreness after exercise, rated low quality by a Cochrane review ([Bleakley et al., 2012](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22336838/)). **Contrast sessions and open water.** Going from a very hot sauna into very cold water puts sudden strain on the heart and blood pressure. Enter cold water slowly, never plunge alone, and skip the cold entirely after alcohol. A studio plunge is not training for Bay swimming. If you want to swim in open water, join a club with safety cover. **What to ask.** What are the sauna and plunge temperatures and recommended time limits? Is staff on the floor? Are there grab rails? Do they ask about heart conditions, blood pressure, pregnancy, medicines and alcohol before your first session? **Bay Area options (sauna / bathhouse / cold plunge):** - [Dogpatch Paddle — Crane Cove Park sauna](https://www.dogpatchpaddle.com/sauna): waterfront sauna and cold plunge. - [Kabuki Springs & Spa — Japantown](https://www.kabukisprings.com/): Japanese-inspired communal bathhouse and spa. - [Alchemy Springs](https://alchemysprings.com/): sauna garden near Union Square. - [Vital Ice — Marina](https://www.vitalicesf.com/): cold plunge, sauna and red light. - [Sweathouz — San Francisco (Marina)](https://sweathouz.com/the-marina-book-now/): infrared sauna, cold plunge and red light. - [Sweathouz

— Colma](https://sweathouz.com/daly-city-book-now/): infrared sauna, cold plunge and red light. - [Reboot Float Spa — Fire & Ice](https://www.rebootfloatspa.com/fire-ice): sauna and cold plunge. - [Custom Fit SF — Market Street recovery](https://customfitsf.com/services/recovery): sauna and cold plunge (also DEXA/VO2). - [Otherland](https://www.otherland.com/): infrared sauna and cold plunge. - [Perspire Sauna Studio — Berkeley](https://www.perspiresaunastudio.com/locations/berkeley): infrared sauna and red light. - [Perspire Sauna Studio — Corte Madera](https://www.perspiresaunastudio.com/locations/corte-madera): infrared sauna and red light.

Float tanks

What the evidence says. In a small trial, floating in warm salt water with reduced light and sound lowered anxiety for a short time after one session ([Feinstein et al., PLOS ONE, 2018](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29394251/)). That is early evidence, not proof of lasting health effects. Ask about cleaning and water treatment, and skip a float if you have open cuts or a skin infection. **Bay Area options (float):** - [Reboot Float Spa — Mission](https://www.rebootfloatspa.com/locations/mission): float, cryotherapy, infrared sauna and cold plunge. - [Reboot Float Spa — Rockridge, Oakland](https://www.rebootfloatspa.com/locations/rockridge): float, cryotherapy, infrared sauna, cold plunge and red light. - [KumeFloat — Oakland](https://kumefloat.com/): float, cryotherapy, cold plunge and infrared sauna.

Red light

What the evidence says. Red and near-infrared light has been studied mainly for skin and wound outcomes, with variable study quality ([Avci et al., 2013](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24049929/)). Be cautious with claims about fat loss, "mitochondria boosting" or longevity. Ask about eye protection and about any medicines that make you sensitive to light.

Whole-body cryotherapy

What the evidence says. FDA has said it has not cleared or approved any whole-body cryotherapy device for medical treatment, and has listed risks including oxygen deficiency when liquid nitrogen is used, frostbite, burns and eye injury ([FDA consumer update, archived](https://web.archive.org/web/20240213033124/https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/whole-body-cry
Bay Area options (cryotherapy / recovery): - [Pause Studio — Castro](https://pausestudio.com/locations/castro): cryotherapy, red light, float and infrared sauna/cold plunge (menu also lists IV). - [Restore Hyper Wellness — Pleasant Hill](https://www.restore.com/locations/ca-pleasant-hill-ca053): cryotherapy, red light and sauna/cold plunge (menu also lists IV).

Hyperbaric oxygen: medical versus wellness

What the evidence says. FDA has cleared hyperbaric chambers for a specific list of conditions, such as decompression sickness and certain non-healing wounds, and warns that claims for many other conditions are not supported ([FDA consumer update, archived](https://web.archive.org/web/20251218065045/https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/hyperbaric-oxyg
The Bay Area has hospital-based hyperbaric medicine units. They treat cleared medical conditions, usually after a referral, and are not wellness studios. The Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society keeps a list of [accredited facilities](https://uhms.org/accredited-facilities/). **What to ask.** Hard medical chamber or soft "mild" chamber? Who supervises, and what are their credentials? What ear, sinus and lung screening is done? Is this for a cleared condition? **Bay Area options (hyperbaric, medical — usually by referral):** - [UCSF Health

Hyde Hospital — Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy](https://sfcommunityhospitals.ucsfhealth.org/saint-francis/services/hyperbaric-oxygen-therapy): hospital wound-care hyperbaric service. - [Hyperbaric Medical Services — O'Farrell Street](https://www.hyperbaricmedicalservices.com/facility): medical hyperbaric oxygen and advanced wound care. - [Stanford Advanced Wound Care Center — Redwood City](https://stanfordhealthcare.org/medical-clinics/advanced-wound-care-center.html): outpatient wound care including hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

A note on IV menus

Pause Studio and Restore also list IV drips on their menus. IV-only lounges in our directory are not listed here. An IV is a medical procedure, not a wellness add-on. We list these businesses for their other services and do not recommend IV therapy.

DEXA, VO2 and strength

What they measure. A DEXA scan uses low-dose X-ray to estimate fat, lean mass and bone, so book one when the result will change what you do ([FDA, medical X-ray imaging](https://www.fda.gov/radiation-emitting-products/medical-imaging/medical-x-ray-imaging)). VO2 max testing measures cardiorespiratory fitness. In observational data, higher fitness is associated with lower long-term mortality ([Mandsager et al., JAMA Network Open, 2018](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30646252/)). A meta-analysis of cohort studies found muscle-strengthening activity associated with lower all-cause mortality ([Momma et al., BJSM, 2022](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35228201/)). For most adults, a strength programme is a better first spend than a gadget. **Bay Area options (DEXA / VO2):** - [DexaFit — San Francisco](https://www.dexafit.com/locations/california/san-francisco): DEXA and VO2 testing. - [BodySpec — Bay Area](https://www.bodyspec.com/booking?region=norcal): DEXA body composition.

Wearables are a starting point, not a diagnosis

Heart-rate variability, sleep scores and "readiness" numbers can help someone notice patterns. They are not medical tests. If a wearable flags an irregular rhythm, very low or high heart rate, or repeated poor oxygen readings, see a clinician rather than booking another recovery session.

A five-question checklist for any Bay Area studio

1. **Purpose:** Is this a medical treatment or a wellness session, and what is it meant to do for me? 2. **Supervision:** Who is on site, and what are their credentials? 3. **Screening:** What health and medicine questions do you ask before the first session? 4. **Evidence:** Can you point me to the study or FDA clearance behind this claim? 5. **Exit:** What happens if I feel unwell, and when should I see my own doctor? If a provider promises to cure a disease, reverse ageing or replace your medical care, treat it as a red flag. FDA's [health fraud page](https://www.fda.gov/consumers/health-fraud-scams) explains how to spot these claims.

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Are you a Bay Area provider?

Run a sauna, bathhouse, float, red light, cryotherapy, hyperbaric or diagnostics business in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Marin or the Peninsula? You can ask to be listed in the letsgo.health directory. Enquire: support@resohealth.life *Listings are drawn from businesses' public websites and checked on 5 Nov 2026 against the San Francisco directory CSV; seven were newly added in this batch. Inclusion is not an endorsement. Prices, services and supervision change, so confirm with the provider directly.*

Safety note

If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, or take prescription medicines, check with your own doctor before booking heat, cold, cryotherapy, hyperbaric, or float sessions.

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